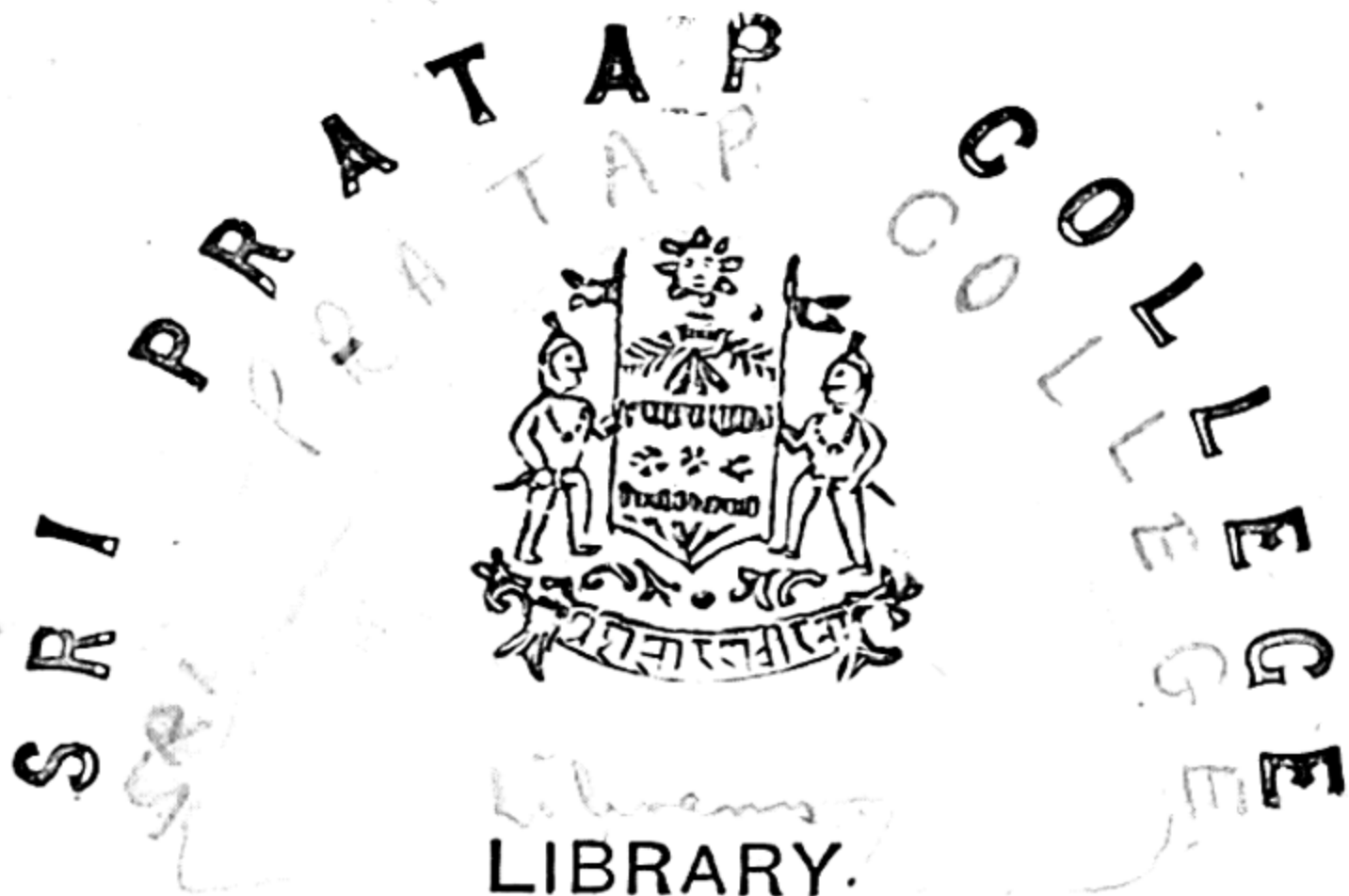


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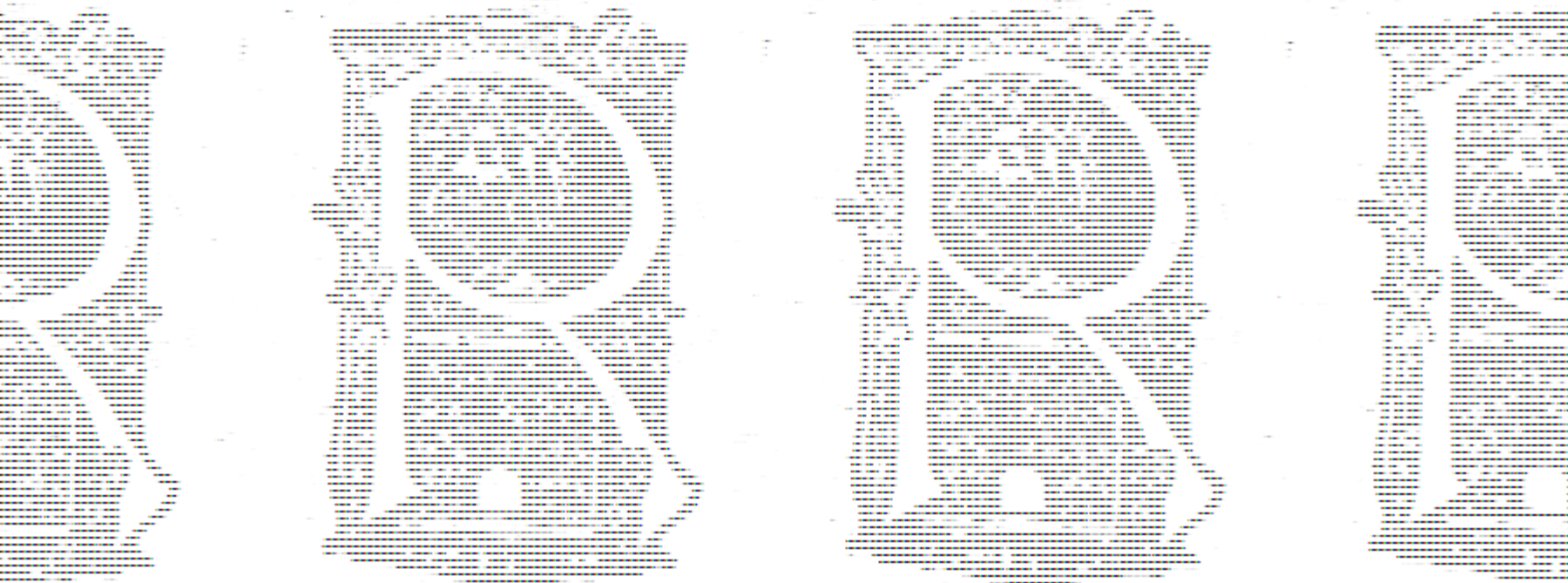
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THE ENGLISH AT THE NORTH POLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE "FORWARD."

"TO-MORROW, at ebb tide, the brig *Forward* will sail from the New Prince's Docks, captain K. Z., chief officer, Richard Shandon; destination unknown."

Such was the announcement which appeared in the *Liverpool Herald* of April 5th, 1860.

The departure of a brig is not a very important event for one of the largest trading ports in England. Indeed, who would notice it among the crowd of ships, of every tonnage and every nation, which the long miles of floating docks can scarcely contain; and yet from an early hour on the morning of April 9th, numbers of people began to assemble on the wharf. The whole maritime population of Liverpool seemed to agree to congregate there, and not only the sailors, but all classes, came flocking thither. The dock labourers

left their work, the city clerks their dingy counting-houses, and the shopkeepers their deserted shops. Omnibus after omnibus set down its load of passengers outside the dock walls, till the entire city appeared to have turned out to see the *Forward* sail.

The *Forward* was a brig of 170 tons, fitted up with a screw propeller and an engine of 120-horse power. She might easily have been confounded with other brigs in port by the ordinary onlooker, and yet to the practised eye of a sailor there were certain peculiarities about her which made her unmistakable, as appeared from the conversation of a group of men assembled on the deck of the *Nautilus*, a vessel lying close by. They were eagerly discussing the probable destination of the *Forward*, and each one had his own conjecture.

"What do you think of her masts?" said one. "It certainly ain't usual for steam-ships to have such large sails."

"Depend upon it," said a broad, red-faced quartermaster, "that yon craft reckons more on her masts than her engine. She hasn't all that topsail for nothing. To me it is clear enough the *Forward* is bound for the Arctic or Antarctic Seas, where great ice mountains shut out the wind rather more than suits a strong, brave ship."

"You must be right, Master Cornhill," said a third sailor; "and have you noticed the stern, what a straight line it makes to the sea?"

"Ay! and more than that, it is sheathed with cast-

steel as sharp as a razor, which would cut a three-decker in two if the *Forward* fell foul of it sideways at full speed," replied Cornhill.

"That it would," added a Mersey pilot, "for she can make fourteen knots an hour easily with her screw. It was wonderful to see how she cut through the water on her trial trip. Take my word for it, she's a good runner, and no mistake."

"Besides," said Cornhill, "do you see the size of the helm-post?"

"Yes; but what does that prove?"

"That proves, my boys," said Cornhill, in a disdainful, self-satisfied manner, "that you can neither see nor think; that proves that it was a great matter to give full play to the rudder, a very necessary thing in the frozen seas."

"Right, right," said the sailors.

"And, what's more," continued one of them, "the loading of the ship confirms your opinion. I had it from Clifton, who is one of her men, that she is taking provisions for five years, and coals too. That is all the cargo; nothing but coals and provisions, and great bales of woollen clothing and seal-skins."

"That settles it, of course," replied Cornhill. "But you say you know Clifton—hasn't he told you where they are going?"

"He doesn't know himself; he is in perfect ignorance. All the crew have been engaged like that. Where he's going, he'll hardly know that himself before he's there."

"It looks to me very much as if they were all going to Old Nick," said an incredulous listener.

"And did you ever hear of such wages?" continued Clifton's friend. "Five times more than the common pay! Ay, if it hadn't been for that, Dick Shandon wouldn't have found a man to sign the articles. To make a voyage in such a queer-looking ship, bound for nobody knows where, and coming back nobody knows when—I must confess it wouldn't suit me."

"It doesn't matter much whether it would or not, old fellow, for you couldn't go; they wouldn't have you on board the *Forward*," said Cornhill.

"Pray, why not?"

"Because you can't meet one of the conditions required. I am told that all married men are ineligible, so you are shut out."

"There's so much bounce about the brig altogether," Cornhill went on, "even down to the very name, the *Forward*. Forward where to? And then there is no captain!"

"Yes, there is," said a frank, boyish-looking young sailor.

"What! a captain has turned up?"

"Yes, a captain."

"You are fancying, youngster, that Shandon is the captain," said Cornhill.

"But I tell you," returned the lad, "that——"

"And I tell you," interrupted Cornhill, "that Shandon is the mate and nothing more. He is a brave hardy sailor, an old hand in whaling expeditions, and a

thorough good fellow, quite fit to be captain, but captain he is not, any more than you or I. He doesn't even know who is to take the command. At the right time the real captain is to make his appearance, but when that is to be, or in what part of the world, no one knows, for Shandon has not said, nor is he allowed to reveal the ship's destination."

"All that may be, Master Cornhill," replied the young sailor, "but I assure you that at this very moment there is some one on board, some one whose arrival was announced in the very letter which contained the offer to Mr. Shandon of chief officer's berth!"

"What!" retorted Cornhill, frowning angrily at the audacious youngster. "Do you dare to stand out that there is a captain on board?"

"Yes, certainly, Master Cornhill."

"You say that to my face!"

"Of course I do; I had it from Johnson, one of the officers on board."

"From Mr. Johnson?"

"Yes, he told me himself."

"Johnson told you, did he?"

"He not only told me, but he showed me the captain."

"Showed you the captain!" repeated Cornhill in blank amaze.

"Yes! he showed me the captain."

"And you really saw him?"

"Yes! with my own eyes."

"And who is it, pray?"

"It is a dog."

"A dog?"

"A dog with four feet?"

"Yes!"

The sailors of the *Nautilus* seemed stupefied. Under any other circumstances, such a declaration would have provoked shouts of laughter. The idea of a dog being captain of a brig of 170 tons. It was too ludicrous. But there was something altogether so extraordinary about this *Forward* that one need think twice before denying or even ridiculing the boy's assertion, and instead of laughing, Cornhill said gravely—

"So it was Johnson who introduced you to this novel sort of a captain, and you actually saw him?"

"As plain as I see you."

"Well, Cornhill, what do you think of that?" asked the sailors, eagerly.

"I think nothing," replied Cornhill, roughly, "except that the *Forward* either belongs to the devil, or to some fools let loose from Bedlam!"


The crew continued silently gazing at the wonderful brig, watching the final preparations for departure, but not one among them dared to say, or even so much as pretended to believe, that Johnson had been only making a fool of the boy, and imposing on his credulity.

The story of the dog had already got abroad, and more than one among the crowds that thronged the

quays sought to catch a glimpse of this dog-captain, half believing him supernatural.

Besides, for many months past the *Forward* had been attracting public attention. The peculiarities about her build, the mystery hanging over her, the incognito preserved by the captain, the strange way in which Shandon had received his appointment, the special care taken in selecting the crew, and the unknown destination—all combined to invest her with a singular charm of romance.

The *Forward* had been constructed at Birkenhead by Messrs. Scott and Co., one of the most famous ship-builders in England. The firm had received from Richard Shandon a minute plan, detailing every particular as to tonnage and dimensions, and also a sketch drawn with the greatest care, and evidently the production of a practised seaman. As considerable sums were forthcoming, the work was commenced at once, and proceeded with as rapidly as possible.

The brig was characterised by the utmost solidity. She was evidently intended to resist enormous pressure, for the frame was not only made of teak-wood—a sort of oak which grows in India, and is remarkable for its extreme hardness—but was firmly bound together by strong iron bars. It was indeed a matter of surprise among the seafaring population that frequented the building yard, why the entire hull was not sheet iron like most steamers, and many inquiries were put to the shipwrights, but all the answer received was that they were obeying orders. 

By slow degrees the brig began to take shape on the stocks, and connoisseurs were struck by the elegance and strength of her proportions. As the crew of the *Nautilus* had remarked, the stern made a right angle with the keel. It had no breakhead, but a sharp edge of cast steel made in the foundries of R. Hawthorn, at Newcastle. This metal prow glittering in the sun, gave a peculiar look to the ship, though there was nothing absolutely warlike about it. However, there was a cannon of 16 lbs. calibre mounted on the forecastle, on a pivot, to allow of its being easily pointed in all directions; and yet, in spite of both stem and cannon, the vessel was not the least like a ship intended for battle.

On the 5th of February the *Forward* was ready, and made a successful launch in the presence of an immense crowd of spectators.

The day after the launch, the engine arrived from Newcastle, from the works of Messrs. Hawthorn. This engine, of 120-horse power, and provided with oscillating cylinders, was of considerable size for a brig of 170 tons, but did not take up much room. As soon as it was placed on board, the work of provisioning began, and no easy matter it was to stow away food for six years. The stores consisted principally of salted and smoked meat, dried fish, biscuit and flour, mountains of coffee and tea were thrown into the hold in a perfect avalanche. Richard Shandon superintended personally the storage of this precious cargo, arranging it like a man who understood his business. Everything was numbered and labelled and disposed in the most orderly manner.

A large quantity of pemmican was also taken on board, an Indian preparation, which contains much nourishment in small bulk. ✓

The nature of the provisions left no doubt as to the length of the cruise; and to an observing eye, there was none as to the ship's destination, at the sight of those barrels of lime-juice, and lumps of chalk, and packets of mustard, and sorrel, and cochlearia seed; in other words, the abundance of anti-scorbutic preparations proved that the *Forward* was bound for the Polar Seas. Shandon had no doubt received special orders about this part of the cargo, for he paid studious attention to it, and also fitted up the medicine chest with the most scrupulous care. ✓

The stock of fire-arms was not great, a reassuring fact to timid people, but on the other hand, the powder-magazine was full to overflowing. What was it intended for? There was far more than one solitary cannon could possibly use. Then there were also enormous saws, and other powerful instruments, such as levers, hand-saws, heaps of bullets, immense hatchets, not to speak of a goodly number of blasting cylinders, the explosion of which would have blown the Custom House at Liverpool into the air. It was all very strange, if not alarming, even without taking into account the fusees, and signals, and fireworks of all descriptions. ✓

The boats too were objects of great curiosity to the gaping crowd that hung about the New Prince's Docks. There was a canoe made of tinned iron, covered with

gutta percha, a long mahogany whaling-boat, and a number of halkett-boats or india-rubber cloaks, which could be converted into canoes by inflating the lining.

The *Forward* was certainly altogether a most mysterious, puzzling vessel, and people grew quite excited about her, now that the hour for sailing had come.

CHAPTER II.

THE UNEXPECTED LETTER.

EIGHT months prior to the time when our story commences, Richard Shandon had received the following letter :—

“ ABERDEEN, *Aug. 2nd*, 1859.

“ SIR,—This letter is to inform you that a sum of £16,000 sterling has been placed in the hands of Messrs. Marcuart and Co., bankers, Liverpool. I also enclose cheques signed by me, which you can draw on the said bankers up to the above-mentioned amount.

“ You do not know me. It matters not. I know you. That is the most important thing.

“ I offer you the place of chief officer on board the brig *Forward*, bound for an expedition which may be long and perilous.

"If you refuse, that is all about it; if you accept, your salary will be £500, to be raised one-tenth each year you are away.

"The brig *Forward* has at present no existence. You will have to get her built, and ready to go to sea by the beginning of April at the latest.

"I subjoin a detailed plan and a draft, to which you will scrupulously adhere. The ship is to be constructed by Messrs. Scott and Co., who will arrange matters with you.

"I beg you will pay special attention to the selection of the crew of the *Forward*. This will consist of the captain, myself, the chief officer, yourself, a second mate, a boatswain, two engineers, an ice-master, eight sailors, and two stokers—eighteen men altogether, including Dr. Clawbonny, of your city, who will introduce himself to you at the right time.

"It is necessary that all the men chosen for the expedition of the *Forward* shall be English, unencumbered by family ties, unmarried, sober, as neither beer nor spirits are allowed on board, and ready for any enterprise and any suffering. Give the preference to those of sanguine temperament, who possess a great amount of animal heat.

"You will offer them five times as much as the ordinary wages, with an increase of one-tenth each year of service. At the close of the expedition £500 is guaranteed to each man and £2,000 to yourself. These deposits will be left with Messrs. Marcuart and Co., the aforesaid bankers.

"The campaign will be long and arduous, but honourable. You need have no hesitation about it, Mr. Shandon.

"Reply to me by letter, addressed to *K. Z., Poste restante, Gotteborg, Sweden.*

"P.S. On the 15th of February next you will be forwarded a large Danish stag-hound with loose hanging lips, very dark in colour, and striped with black. You will take him on board, and order him to be fed with barley bread mixed with boiled greaves. You will notify his safe arrival to me at Livourne, Italy, addressed to the same initials.

"The captain of the *Forward* will present himself, and make himself known when he is required. You will receive further instructions just before you sail.

"K. Z., Captain of the *Forward*.

"To Mr. Richard Shandon, Liverpool."

CHAPTER III.

DOCTOR CLAWBONNY.

RICHARD SHANDON was a good sailor and a man of established reputation. He had been in command of whalers for years, and was familiar with the Arctic Seas.

A letter like the foregoing did not consequently astonish him so much as might have been expected. Astonished he certainly was, but in a cool, composed sort of fashion, like a man who has received similar communications before. He was in a position, too, to meet the required conditions. He had neither wife, nor child, nor relatives; he was free, in all respects. So having no one to consult, he went straight off to the bankers, Messrs. Marcuart and Co., for "if the money is there," he said to himself, "the rest is all right."

The money was there sure enough, for Shandon was received by the firm with all the respect due to a man who has £16,000 quietly waiting for him in their strong chest; so without loss of time he called for pen and ink, and wrote a letter in a large sailor-like hand, to the address given, signifying his acceptance of the offered trust.

That very same day he put himself in communication with the shipbuilders at Birkenhead, and twenty-four hours after, the keel of the *Forward* was planted on the stocks in their building-yard.

Richard Shandon was about forty years of age, a robust, brave, energetic fellow—three qualifications necessary to a sailor, for they impart self-reliance, vigour, and sangfroid. He got the character of being jealous and difficult to get on with, one who has made his men fear him, but never gained their love. This did not interfere, however, with his getting a crew, for he was too well known as a skilful leader to have any trouble in finding men to follow him.

Shandon was rather afraid, though, that the mysterious nature of the enterprise would cripple his movements, and determined to noise it abroad as little as possible.

"That's my best plan," he said to himself, "for those old ferrets would be down on me, who must know the why and the wherefore of everything, and as I am quite ignorant myself, I should be rather at a loss for an answer. This K. Z. is a queer old fellow, and no mistake, but, after all, what does that matter? He knows me, and reckons on me, and that is enough. As to the ship, she will turn out a beauty, or my name is not Richard Shandon, if she is not meant for the frozen seas. But I'll keep that secret to myself and my officers."

Shandon's next business was to pick out his men in accordance with the rules laid down by the captain. He knew a fine active young fellow, called Wall, who was thirty years of age, a capital sailor, and had been more than one voyage to the North Seas. He offered him the post of second mate, and James Wall accepted it blindfold, for all he cared for was being on the ocean, and the destination mattered little. Shandon told him the whole story, however, from beginning to end, both to him and to a sailor named Johnson, whom he chose as boatswain.

"Not much luck to be had there," said James Wall. "But still perhaps as much there as anywhere else. Even if it is to find the North-West passage, people come back alive, right enough."

"Not always," said Johnson; "but that's no reason for not going."

"Besides, supposing we are right in our conjectures," added Shandon, "we must allow we could hardly make a voyage under more favourable circumstances. The *Forward* will be a first-rate ship, and her steam-engine will be a great help. All we want is eighteen men."

"Eighteen men?" replied Johnson; "that is the same number the American Dr. Kane had on board when he made his famous journey towards the Pole."

"It is singular enough, certainly," said Wall, "what can induce a private individual to cross the sea again, from Davis's Straits to Behring's Straits. The Franklin Expeditions have cost England more than £760,000, without producing any practical result. Who can be fool enough to throw away his own fortune into the bargain like this?"

"Don't forget, James, though," replied Shandon, "that we are reasoning on a mere simple supposition. Whether we are actually going to the North or the South Seas, I know no more than you. Perhaps, indeed, it is on some new quest altogether. Moreover, there is a Dr. Clawbonny to make his appearance some of these days, who will no doubt be commissioned to give us fuller information. We shall see all in good time."

"Ay! we must just wait," said Johnson, "and, meantime, I am going to make it my business to look after right men to go with us; and as to their having

plenty of animal heat in them, I'll guarantee that beforehand. You may safely leave that to me."

This Johnson was a valuable man, well acquainted with the northern latitudes. He had been quartermaster on board the *Phoenix*, one of the vessels despatched in search of Franklin in 1853. The brave fellow had accompanied Lieutenant Bellot in his journey across the ice, and been eye-witness of his death. Johnson knew the whole seafaring population of Liverpool, and set to work immediately to select his crew.

He was so effectually aided by Shandon and Wall, that by the beginning of December the number was complete. But the task had not been easy; many had been attracted by the tempting pay offered, but had not courage to risk the unknown expedition, while more than one who had bravely pledged himself to go came and retracted his word, and gave back his advance note, having been dissuaded by his friends from so hazardous an undertaking. All, of course, wished to penetrate the mystery, and so pressed Shandon with questions that he was obliged to refer them to Johnson, who gave the same unvarying answers to each.

"What is it you want me to tell you, old boy?" he would say. "I know no more than you do. Anyhow, you'll be in good company, with jolly fellows who know what they're about. That's something, isn't it? So be quick and make up your mind—take it or leave it!"

Sometimes he would add, "My only difficulty is which to choose, for such high wages as you are offered

will find plenty to jump at them. Not a man among you ever heard of such pay being given before."

"Well, it certainly is a great temptation; we should get enough to live on all the rest of our days," said the sailors.

"I don't conceal from you," continued Johnson, "that the expedition will be a long one, and full of hardship and danger. That is formally told us in our instructions, so let us have a clear understanding, that each man may know what he undertakes; he commits himself, in all probability, to attempt all that is, humanly speaking, possible, and perhaps even more. If you haven't a brave heart, then, and an iron constitution, or if you can't look the certainty in the face that there are twenty chances to one against your ever returning, you had better be off, and leave the berth for somebody less chicken-hearted."

"But at least tell us who the captain is," was the rejoinder.

"The captain is Richard Shandon, his friend, till he introduces you another."

Now, to speak the truth, Richard thought this himself, and quietly indulged the hope that, at the last moment, he would receive definite instructions about the voyage, and have entire command placed in his hands. ✕

Shandon and Johnson had implicitly obeyed the injunctions given for choosing the crew. They were all fresh and florid looking, full of energy and pluck, and having caloric enough in them to heat the engine

almost ; in fact, the very men to stand extreme cold. In outward appearance, certainly, they were not all equally strong ; and two or three among them, especially two sailors called Gripper and Garry, and Simpson the harpooner, Shandon almost hesitated to take, for they belonged to "Pharaoh's lean kine," but they were well-built, and their circulation was good, so their names were entered.

The whole crew were Protestants, belonging to the same religious denomination. It was a matter of some importance that the men should think alike, as far as creed was concerned, to prevent party strife ; for it has been always found in long voyages that assembling the men for reading the Scriptures and common prayer is a powerful means of promoting harmony, and of cheering them in hours of despondency. Shandon knew by experience the excellent moral effect of such practices, as they are invariably adopted on board all vessels that winter in Arctic regions.

The next business of Shandon and his officers was the provisioning of the ship. In doing this they strictly followed the instructions of the captain—instructions so clear, precise, and minute, that the quantity and quality were given of even the smallest article. Ready money was paid for everything, and a discount of eight per cent. received, which Richard carefully put to the credit of K. Z.

Crew, provisions, and cargo were all ready by January, 1860. The *Forward* was rapidly assuming proportions, and Shandon never let a day pass without a

visit to Birkenhead, to see how things went on. On the 23rd of that same month, he was going across as usual in one of the large steamers that ferry passengers over the Mersey. It was one of those foggy mornings when you can scarcely see your hand before you ; but, in spite of the obscurity, Shandon could make out the figure of some stranger advancing towards him, and as he got nearer, saw it was a little stout man, with a bright jovial face and kindly eye, who came up, and seizing both his hands, shook them so heartily in his own, in such an impulsive, familiar, free-and-easy style, that a Frenchman would have said he came from the sunny south.

But though the new comer was not a Southerner, he made a narrow escape of it, for he was full of talk and gesticulation, and seemed as if he would explode unless he came out with all he thought. His small intellectual eyes and large mobile mouth were safety-valves to let out the steam, and he talked and talked so incessantly that Shandon was fairly overpowered. He made a shrewd guess, however, who this voluble little man was, and, taking advantage of a momentary pause, managed to say, "Doctor Clawbonny, I presume?"

"Himself in person, my good sir. Here I have been seeking you for a whole quarter of an hour, and asking everybody for you everywhere. Only imagine my impatience ! Five minutes more, and I should have lost my wits. It is really then Richard Shandon I see. You actually exist ? you're not a myth ? Your hand, your hand, that I may grasp it in mine. Yes, it is a genuine

flesh and blood hand, and there is a veritable Richard Shandon. Well, come, if there's a chief officer, there must be a brig called the *Forward* that he commands; and if he commands she is going to sail, and if she's going to sail she will take Dr. Clawbonny on board."

"Yes, Doctor, surely. There is a brig called the *Forward*, and she is going to sail, and I am Richard Shandon."

"That's logic," said the Doctor, drawing a long breath, "that's logic, and I am overjoyed to hear it, for now I have reached the summit of my ambition. I have waited long, and wished to go a voyage; and now with you to command——"

"Allow me," interrupted Shandon.

But Clawbonny took no notice, and went on, "With you; we are sure of pushing onward, and never yielding an inch of our ground."

"But, sir," began Shandon again.

"You are a tried man, sir; you have seen service. You have a right to be proud."

"If you will please allow me to——"

"No, I will not allow your skill, and bravery, and hardihood to be underrated even by you. The captain who has chosen you for his chief officer knows his man, I'll be bound."

"But that's not the question," said Shandon, impatiently.

"Well, and what is the question, then? Don't keep me in suspense, pray."

"You won't let me speak. Please to tell me, Doctor, how you came to join in the expedition of the *Forward*."

"Well, it was through a letter which I have here from the brave captain, a very laconic one, though it says all that is necessary."

And drawing the said letter out of his pocket, he handed it to Shandon, who read as follows :—

"INVERNESS, Jan. 22nd, 1860.

"If Dr. Clawbonny is willing to embark in the brig *Forward*, let him present himself to the chief officer, Richard Shandon, who has received orders concerning him.

"The Captain of the *Forward*,

"K. Z.

"To Dr. Clawbonny, Liverpool."

"The letter came this morning, and here I am ready to go on board."

"But, at any rate," said Shandon, "you know where we are going, I suppose?"

"Not I; but what does it matter to me, so long as I go somewhere? People call me a learned man, but they are much mistaken. I know nothing, and if I happen to have published some few books which sell pretty well, they are not worth anything, and it is very good of the people to buy them. I know nothing, I tell you, except that I am an ignoramus. Now I have

a chance of completing, or rather recommencing, my studies in medicine, in surgery, in history, in geography, in botany, in mineralogy, in conchology, in geodesy, in chemistry, in natural philosophy, in mechanics, in hydrography. Well, I accept the offer, and don't need much pressing, I assure you."

"Then you know nothing about the destination of the *Forward*?" said Richard, in a disappointed tone.

"I know this much, Mr. Shandon, that she is going where there will be much to learn and discover, and much to instruct us, for we shall come across other nations with different customs from our own; she is going, in short, where I have never been."

"But you know nothing more definite than that?" exclaimed Shandon.

"I have heard some talk of her going to the North Seas. So much the better if we are bound for the Arctic."

"But don't you know the captain?" asked Shandon again.

"Not at all; but he is a brave fellow, you may be sure."

By this time the steamer had arrived at Birkenhead, and Clawbonny and Shandon landed on the pier, and at once repaired to the shipbuilding-yard. The sight of the brig almost made the little doctor beside himself with joy, and he went subsequently every day to look at her on the stocks.

He made his abode with Shandon, and undertook the arrangement of the medicine-chest, for he was 3

duly qualified doctor and a clever man, though rather unpractical. At twenty-five years of age he was just an ordinary surgeon, but at forty he was a learned man, well known throughout the whole city, and a leading member of the Literary and Philosophical Institute of Liverpool. He possessed a small private fortune, which enabled him to practise gratuitously in a great many cases, and his extreme amiability made him universally beloved. He never did an injury to a single human being, not even to himself. Lively and rattling as he was, and an incessant talker, he had an open heart and hand for everybody.

As soon as the news of his appointment to the *Forward* spread through the city, his friends besieged him with solicitations to remain at home. But their arguments and entreaties only made him more determined to go, and when the little man once got a crotchet in his brain no one could turn him from it.

On the 5th of February the *Forward* was launched, and two months later she was ready to go to sea.

Punctually to the time, on the very day fixed for his coming by the captain's letter, a large Danish dog made his appearance, sent by rail from Edinburgh to Richard Shandon's address. He was an ill-favoured, snappish, unsociable animal, with a peculiar expression in his eye. A brass collar round his neck bore the name of the ship, and he was installed on board the same day, and a letter despatched to Livourne to inform the captain of his safe arrival.

The crew of the *Forward* was now complete, with the exception of the captain. It numbered the following individuals: 1. The Captain, K. Z. 2. The Chief Officer. 3. The Second Officer, James Wall. 4. Doctor Clawbonny. 5. Johnson, the boatswain. 6. Simpson, the harpooner. 7. Bell, the carpenter. 8. Brunton, the chief engineer. 9. Plover, the second engineer. 10. Strong, a coloured man, the cook. 11. Foker, the ice-master. 12. Wolsten, the gunsmith. 13. Bolton, sailor. 14. Garry, sailor. 15. Clifton, sailor. 16. Gripper, sailor. 17. Pen, sailor. 18. Warren, stoker.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DOG-CAPTAIN.

THE 5th of April brought the sailing day. Dr. Clawbonny's coming on board somewhat reassured people's minds, for where the learned Doctor went it must be safe to follow; but still the sailors seemed so restless and uneasy, that Shandon longed to be fairly out at sea, for he did not feel sure of any of them till they had lost sight of land.

Dr. Clawbonny's cabin was on the poop, which took up all the stern of the vessel. The captain's cabin and the chief officer's were on either side, overlooking the deck. The captain's remained hermetically closed after

being furnished according to his written directions, and the key, as he ordered, was sent to him at Lubeck, so that no one could enter but himself.

This was a great vexation to Shandon, as it damped his ambitious hopes of getting sole command. In fitting up his own cabin, he took for granted they were going to the Arctic, and knowing, as he did, so thoroughly all that was required, he left nothing wanting.

The cabin of the second mate was in the fore-castle, where the men slept—a large, roomy place, with a stove in the centre, and every accommodation, for the sailors were treated as precious cargo on this vessel, and well provided for.

Dr. Clawbonny looked after himself, and he had had plenty of time, as he had taken possession of his cabin since the 5th of February, the day the *Forward* was launched.

“The happiest of the animals,” he said, “would be a snail, who could make a shell to his own liking, and I mean to be an intelligent snail.”

And truly his shell did him credit, for the Doctor took a perfect delight in arranging his scientific treasures. His books, and herbals, and cases, and mathematical instruments; his thermometer, and barometers, and hygrometers, and udometers; his glasses, and compasses, and sextants; and maps and charts; and phials, and powders, and medicine-bottles—all were arranged and classified with an amount of order that might have shamed the British Museum. Inestimable riches were stored up in that small space of six square feet, and it

must be owned the good Doctor was not a little proud of his sanctum, though three of his least corpulent friends would have sufficed to crowd it uncomfortably.

To complete the description of the *Forward* it need only further be said that the dog's-kennel was built right below the window of the mysterious cabin, but its savage inmate preferred wandering between decks and in the hold. It seemed impossible to make him sociable, nobody could do anything with him, and in the night his piteous howls would resound through the whole vessel.

What was the reason? Could it be grief for his absent master? or was it instinctive fear of the voyage? or did it bode approaching danger. This last was the common opinion among the sailors, and many a one joked over it who verily believed the poor dog was an imp of the devil.

Pen, a coarse brutal fellow at all times, rushed so furiously at the beast one day that he fell right against the capstan, and split his head open frightfully. Of course this accident was laid to the "uncanny dog's account."

Clifton was the most superstitious of all the crew, and he made the singular discovery, that whenever the animal was promenading the deck he went to the side the wind was, changing his position as the ship tacked, just as if he had been the captain.

Dr. Clawbonny was so gentle and winning that he would have tamed a tiger, but all his attempts to get into this dog's good graces were in vain.

Besides, the animal would answer to none of the names borne by his canine brethren, so in the end he got called "Captain," for he appeared perfectly familiar with ship life. This was certainly not his first voyage, and more than one of the sailors fully expected to see him some day suddenly assume the human form, and begin giving orders in a stentorian voice.

Richard Shandon had no apprehensions on that score, though he had anxieties enough of another nature, and the night before sailing he had a long confidential talk on the subject with the Doctor and his two officers.

The four sat comfortably together in the saloon indulging themselves with a glass of grog—a farewell glass, for, in accordance with the instructions received from Aberdeen, every man on board, from the captain down to the stoker, must be a total abstainer; that is to say, that neither wine, nor beer, nor spirits would be allowed on board, except in case of illness, or when ordered by the doctor.

For more than an hour they had been talking over the departure of the ship next day, for if the captain's words were verified, the morning would bring a letter containing final instructions.

"I hope," said Shandon, "that if this letter doesn't give us the name of the captain, it will tell us at least the destination of the ship, or how shall we know which way to steer?"

"Goodness me!" exclaimed the impatient Doctor, "were I in your place I should be off even if no letter

came ; it will find its way to us by hook or by crook, I'll warrant."

"You stick at nothing, Doctor. But pray, how should we direct our course then ?"

"Towards the North Pole, most assuredly. That's a matter of course ; it doesn't admit of a doubt."

"Not admit of a doubt !" said Wall ; "and why not towards the South Pole ?"

"The South Pole ! Never ! Would the captain ever dream of exposing a brig to all the difficulties of crossing the broad Atlantic ?" said the Doctor.

"You say go to the North," continued Shandon, "but that's a wide word. Is it to be to Spitzberg, or Greenland, or Labrador, or Hudson's Bay ? It is true enough that all these routes lead to the same impassable fields of ice ; but that doesn't remove the necessity of choosing one or other, and I should be greatly puzzled to decide upon which. Can you help me, Doctor ?"

"No," replied the loquacious little man, vexed at having no answer ready. "But the question is just this, if you don't get a letter, what will you do ?"

"I shall do nothing ; I shall wait."

"You won't sail !" cried Clawbonny, aghast at the possibility.

"No, not I."

"That's the wisest way," said Johnson, quickly, while the Doctor rose, and began pacing the floor, for he was so agitated to sit still. "Yes, that's the

wisest way, and yet too great delay might be attended with bad consequences. In the first place, this is a good time of the year ; and if North it is to be, we ought to take advantage of the breaking up of the ice to get past Davis's Straits. Then, again, the men are getting more restless every day ; their friends and old ship-mates are constantly urging them to leave the *Forward* ; and if we wait much longer we may find ourselves in a pretty fix."

"That's quite true," added James Wall ; "and if once a panic got amongst the crew, they would desert to a man, and I very much doubt if you would succeed in getting fresh hands."

"But what's to be done, then ?" asked Shandon.

"Just what you said," replied the Doctor, "wait ; but wait till to-morrow before you begin to despair. Every one of the captain's promises have been kept hitherto, and there is no ground for believing that we shall not be told where we're going when the right time comes. For my own part, I have not the slightest doubt that we'll be in full sail to-morrow in the Irish Sea, so I vote that we have one more glass of grog, and drink to our safe voyage. It certainly has a rather mysterious beginning, but, with such sailors as you, a thousand chances to one but we'll have a prosperous ending."

"And now, sir, if I may give you my advice," said Johnson, "I would give orders to be ready to sail to-morrow, that the crew may not imagine there is any uncertainty. To-morrow, whether a letter comes or

not, I would weigh anchor. Don't light the fires, for the wind bids fair to keep steady, and we shall be able to get out easily with the tide. Let the pilot come on board and we'll get over to Birkenhead, and cast anchor off the point. This will cut us off from communication with the shore, and yet be near enough to allow of this wonderful letter reaching us, should it arrive after all."

"That's well spoken, my good Johnson," said the Doctor, holding out his hand to the old tar.

"Well, so be it, then," said Shandon, "and now good night."

They each retired to their respective cabins, but were too excited to sleep much, and were up again by sunrise.

The morning letters had all been delivered, but not one came for Richard Shandon. Still he went on with his preparations for sailing, and, as we have seen, the news had spread over Liverpool and brought together an unusual concourse of spectators. Many came on board to give a farewell embrace to a friend, or a last entreaty not to go, and some to gratify their curiosity by looking over the vessel, and trying once more to discover its real destination. But they found the chief officer more taciturn and reserved than ever, and went off grumbling.

Ten o'clock struck, and eleven; at one o'clock the tide would turn. Shandon stood on the poop gazing with uneasy troubled looks at the crowd.

It was a cloudy day and the waves were dashing

high outside the basin, for there was a pretty strong south-east wind blowing, but this could not prevent them getting easily out of the Mersey.

Twelve o'clock struck and no letter. Dr. Clawbonny began to walk impatiently up and down, staring about through his eye-glass, and gesticulating in the most excited manner. Shandon bit his lips silently till the blood came.

Presently Johnson came up to him and said, "If we are to sail with this tide, sir, we have no time to lose; for it will take us a full hour to get out of the docks."

Shandon threw a last look round, consulted his watch, and said briefly, "Go."

This monosyllabic reply was enough for Johnson. He gave immediate orders for all visitors to go ashore, and the sailors began to haul in the ropes. There was a simultaneous rush towards the side of the vessel. The general confusion which ensued was greatly increased by the furious yelling of the dog, and reached a climax when the animal made one sudden bound from the forecastle right into the midst of the crowd, who fled before him right and left. He gave a loud deep bark, and jumped on the poop, carrying a letter between his teeth. Incredible as the fact may appear, it could be confirmed by at least a thousand eye-witnesses.

"A letter!" exclaimed Shandon. "Then *he* is on board."

"*He* has been, there is no doubt, but he is not now,"

replied Johnson, pointing to the deck, which was quite clear of all strangers.

"Captain ! Captain !" called the Doctor, trying to take the letter out of his mouth ; but the dog resisted stoutly, and was evidently determined to give the message to none but the right party.

"Here, Captain !" shouted Shandon ; and at once the beast sprang forward and passively allowed him to withdraw the anxiously-expected missive, giving three loud, clear barks, which were distinctly heard amid the profound silence on the ship and on the quay.

Shandon held the letter in his hand without opening it, till the Doctor exclaimed, impatiently, "Do, pray, read it."

The letter bore no postmark, and was simply addressed, "To the Chief Officer, Richard Shandon, on board the brig *Forward*."

Shandon opened it, and read as follows :—

"You will steer your course towards Cape Farewell. You will reach it on the 20th of April. If the captain does not come on board, you will go through Davis's Straits, and up Baffin's Bay to Melville Bay.

"The captain of the *Forward*,

"K. Z."

Shandon carefully folded up this laconic epistle, put it in his pocket, and gave orders to sail.

The *Forward* was soon out of the basin, and

guided by a Liverpool pilot, got into the Mersey, the crowd hurrying along the Victoria Docks to have a last glimpse as she passed by. The fore and mainsails were soon hoisted, and the brig, with a speed worthy of her name, rounded Birkenhead Point, and glided swiftly away into the Irish Sea.

CHAPTER V.

OUT AT SEA.

THE wind was favourable, though very variable, and full of sudden squalls, and the *Forward* cut her way rapidly through the waves.

At five o'clock the pilot gave up his charge into Shandon's hands, jumped into the boat, and was soon out of sight.

Towards evening they doubled the Calf of Man, passing the southern extremity of the island. During the night the sea was very stormy, but the *Forward* rode it out well, and leaving Ayr Point on the north-west, steered towards the North Channel.

Johnson was right. Once fairly out at sea, there was no more trouble with the sailors. They fell into regular ways at once, and in their admiration of the ship's good qualities, forgot the mystery hanging round her.

The little Doctor almost lived on deck, gulping down the sea air as if he could never be satisfied. He would walk up and down in the stormiest weather, and, for a man of learning, his *sea legs* were pretty fair.

"The sea is a beautiful thing to look at," he said to Johnson, coming on deck after breakfast. "I am rather late in beginning my acquaintance with it, but I'll soon make up for it."

"You are right, Dr. Clawbonny. I wouldn't give one fag-end of sea for all the continents in the world. People say that sailors soon grow tired of their calling, but here have I been forty years at sea, and I enjoy it as much as the first day."

"And what a pleasure there is in feeling a good ship under your feet; and, if I'm any judge, the *Forward* is a regular 'brick.'"

"You are quite right there," said Shandon, coming up at that moment; "it is a well-built ship, and I must confess I have never seen one better provisioned and equipped for an Arctic expedition. That reminds me that, thirty years ago, Captain Ross, going in search of the North-West passage——"

"Went in the *Victory*," interrupted the Doctor, "a brig of nearly the same tonnage as ours, and with a steam-engine, too?"

"What! Do you know all about it?"

"Don't I!" said the Doctor. "Steam was then in its infancy, and the engine on the *Victory* caused much injurious delay. Captain Ross, after vainly trying to

repair it, ended by doing away with it altogether, and left it behind in his first winter quarters."

"Why, Doctor," exclaimed Shandon, "I see you are quite familiar with all the facts."

"I ought to be," replied the Doctor, "for I have read the narratives of Parry, and Ross, and Franklin, and the reports of McClure and Kennedy, and Kane, and McClintock; and then one thing I recollect—this same McClintock's vessel, called the *Fox*, was a screw brig, like ours, and he succeeded in gaining his object in a more direct and easy manner than any of his predecessors."

"That is perfectly true," said Shandon. "This McClintock was a brave sailor. I have seen him at work; and you may add that, like him, we shall be in Davis's Straits before April is out; and if we can manage to get past the ice, it will greatly shorten our voyage."

"At all events," returned the Doctor, "I hope we'll be better off than the *Fox* was in 1857, for she got blocked in among the ice to the north of Baffin's Bay, the very first year, and had to stay there all the winter."

"We'll hope for better luck, Mr. Shandon," said Johnson; "and, certainly, if we can't get on with a ship like the *Forward*, we had better give up trying for good and all."

"Besides," said the Doctor, "if the captain is on board, he will know what's to be done better than we do in our complete ignorance, for this wonderfully

laconic letter of his gives us no clue to the object of the voyage."

"We know what route to take, at any rate," said Shandon, rather sharply, "and that is a good deal. We can manage now, I should think, to do without supernatural interventions and instructions for a full month at least. Besides, you know my own opinion of this mysterious captain."

The Doctor laughed, and said, "I thought with you, once, that he would put you in command of the ship, and never come on board; but now——"

"But what?" said Shandon in a snappish tone.

"But since the arrival of this second letter my views on the subject are somewhat modified."

"And pray why, Doctor?"

"Because, though the letter tells you what course to take, it does not tell you the destination of the *Forward*. Now, he must know where we are going, and I should like to know how a third letter can be sent to you when we are out in the middle of the sea. On the shores of Greenland the postman would certainly be a *rara avis*. What I think, Shandon, is, that our gallant captain is waiting for us at some Danish settlement at Holsteinberg or Upernavik. He will have gone there to complete his cargo of seal-skins, and to buy his sledges and dogs—in fact, to get everything ready that is required for a voyage to the Arctic Seas. I shall not be at all surprised to see him walk out of his cabin some fine morning, and give orders to the crew in the most ordinary matter-of-fact fashion imaginable."

"Possibly," said Shandon, drily; "but meantime the wind is freshening, and it is not very prudent to risk a topmast in a stiff breeze."

This broke off the conversation, and he walked away immediately, and bade the men reef sails.

"He sticks to his notion," said the Doctor to Johnson.

"Ay, and more's the pity," said the boatswain, "for you may be right, Mr. Clawbonny."

Towards evening on the Saturday, the *Forward* doubled the Mull of Galloway, and about three o'clock next morning, leaving the Mull of Cantyre on the north, and Cape Fair on the east, sailed past Rathlin Isle out into the ocean.

It was Sunday—a day well observed by the English, and especially by sailors—so part of the forenoon was spent in Bible reading, the Doctor undertaking the office of chaplain.

Directly afterwards the wind changed to a hurricane, and almost drove the ship against the Irish coast. The waves were very high, and the brig rolled and pitched so heavily, that if the Doctor had felt inclined to be sea-sick, he would have had every excuse.

At seven they lost sight of Cape Malinhead on the south. This was the last glimpse of Europe, and more than one of the brave crew of the *Forward*, destined never more to return, stood gazing with long, lingering look. The gale ceased towards nine at night, and the brig continued her course towards the north-west. She proved herself a first-rate sailer, and made rapid progress

during the next few days. The wind was southerly, and every sail was spread. Sea-birds began to fly about the rigging, and the Doctor, who was a capital shot, succeeded in bringing down a puffin. Fortunately, it fell on the poop. Simpson, the harpooner, picked it up, and bringing it to the little man, said, "Not worth powder and shot, sir."

"On the contrary, my good fellow, it is excellent eating."

"What ! you're going to eat that ?"

"Yes ; and you are going to taste some of it too," said the Doctor, laughing.

"Faugh !" replied Simpson. "Why, it is like all sea-birds, as oily and rancid as possible."

"All very well ; but I have a fashion of my own of dressing them. Just you taste this after it is cooked, and if you could tell it is a sea-bird, I'll promise not to kill another as long as I live."

The Doctor was quite right. He managed to take out all the fat which lies immediately under the skin, mostly about the thighs, and this completely removed all the rancidity and fishy smell peculiar to all sea-birds. The puffin was pronounced excellent even by Simpson himself.

During the hurricane Richard Shandon had closely studied his men, analysing each individual, as every captain ought to do, that he may know what characters he has to work with, and be on his guard.

James Wall was a most devoted officer to Richard, but he was deficient in the initiative faculty ; he could

understand and obey, but that was all : he was only fit for a third-rate position.

Johnson, an experienced old Arctic sailor, had nothing to learn in the way of *sang froid* and boldness.

Simpson, the harpooner, and Bell, the carpenter, were reliable men, slaves of duty and discipline. The ice-master, Foker, a sailor brought up in Johnson's school, would be a valuable man.

Of the other sailors, Garry and Bolton appeared the best. Bolton was a lively, chattering fellow. Garry was about thirty-five years of age, an energetic-looking young man, but rather pale and sad.

The three sailors, Clifton, Gripper, and Pen, were less enthusiastic and resolute. They were rather fond of grumbling ; and Gripper would have given up his engagement, even at the last moment, if he had not been ashamed. So long as things went well, and there was not much work to do, and no danger to risk, he might reckon on these three well enough ; but they needed to be well fed. They took very badly to the teetotal regimen, though they knew it was to be enforced beforehand, and whenever the meal-time came round they were always regretting their brandy or gin, though they made up for it by drinking huge bowls of tea and coffee, which might be had almost *ad libitum* on board.

As for the two engineers, Brunton and Plover, and the stoker Warren, they had sat with folded arms hitherto : their work had not begun.

Shandon knew now how much each man could be depended on.

On the 14th of April the *Forward* crossed the great current called the Gulf Stream, which runs along the eastern shore of the American continent as far as the Banks of Newfoundland, and then curves south-east to the coast of Norway. They found they were in latitude $51^{\circ} 37'$, and longitude $20^{\circ} 58'$, about 200 miles from Greenland. The weather had become cold, and the thermometer had fallen to 32° —that is, to freezing point.

The Doctor had not yet donned his winter costume, but he had followed the example of the sailors and officers, and put an oil-skin jacket and trousers, and big "sou'-wester," and high boots, into which he dropped all of a lump; and really, to see him on deck when the rain was falling in torrents, and the waves dashing over the vessel, he might have been taken for some marine animal, though the comparison would not flatter his vanity.

For two days the weather was extremely unfavourable, the wind was south-west, and the *Forward* could make no way. From the 14th to the 16th the sea continued rough and stormy; but on the Monday a violent shower came, the result of which was an almost immediate calm. Shandon pointed out this peculiar phenomenon to the Doctor, who replied:

"It quite confirms the curious observations made by Scoresby, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, of which I have the honour to be a corresponding member. You see that during rain the waves are less susceptible to the action of the wind, even when violent.

On the contrary, in dry weather, the sea is easily agitated by a comparatively slight breeze.

"But how do you account for this?"

"That is easily answered. I don't account for it at all."

Just at that moment the ice-master, who was on watch at the mast-head, signalled a floating mass on the starboard side, about fifteen miles to leeward.

"An iceberg in these latitudes!" exclaimed the Doctor.

Shandon pointed his glass in the given direction, and confirmed the announcement of the pilot.

"That's strange!" said the Doctor.

"Does that astonish you?" asked the chief officer, smiling. "What! we are actually fortunate enough to find something that astonishes you!"

"Well, it astonishes me, and yet it doesn't," replied the Doctor, smiling, "for, in 1813, the brig *Anne*, of Poole, got blocked in among ice-fields in the forty-fourth degree of north latitude, and Dayement, her captain, counted icebergs by hundreds."

"Capital!" said Shandon; "you can still find something to tell us about it that we don't know."

"Oh! not very much," was the modest reply of the amiable little man, "except that icebergs have been met with in still lower latitudes."

"I know that, my dear Doctor, without your telling me, for when I was a cabin-boy aboard the *Fly*, a sloop-of-war——"

"In 1818," interrupted the Doctor, "at the end

of March or we might say April, you passed between two great islands of floating ice in the forty-second degree of latitude."

"Really, you're too bad, Doctor!" exclaimed Shandon.

"But it is true. I have no reason to be astonished, then, at finding a floating iceberg in front of our ship, seeing we are ten degrees farther north."

"I declare, Doctor, you're a perfect well; you have only to let down the bucket."

"All right. I shall dry up sooner than you think; and now, all I want to make me the happiest of doctors is, to see this curious phenomenon a little nearer."

"Precisely," said Shandon. "Johnson," he added, calling to his boatswain, "it seems to me the wind is getting up."

"Yes, sir," said Johnson, "we are losing speed, and the currents from the Straits of Davis will soon begin to affect us."

"You are right, Johnson; and if we want to be at Cape Farewell by the 20th of April, we must put on steam, or we shall be dashed against the coast of Labrador. Mr. Wall, will you give orders for the fires to be lighted immediately?"

His orders were executed forthwith, and in another hour the steam had acquired sufficient power to propel the screw, and the *Forward* was racing along against the wind with close-reefed sails at full speed.

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT POLAR CURRENT.

BEFORE long, the numerous flights of birds—puffins, petrels, and others peculiar to these desolate shores—indicated that they were approaching Greenland. The *Forward* was steaming rapidly north, leaving leeward a long cloud of black smoke.

On Tuesday, the 17th of April, the ice-master signalled the *blink* of ice about twenty miles ahead, at least. A radiant band of dazzling whiteness lighted up all the surrounding atmosphere, in spite of somewhat heavy clouds. Experienced Arctic sailors cannot mistake this appearance; and the old hands on board at once pronounced it to be the luminous reflection from a field of ice about thirty miles in the distance.

Towards evening the wind fell south, and became so favourable that *Shandon* was able to dispense with steam, and depend once more on the sails.

On the 18th, at three o'clock, an ice-stream was discovered in the far horizon, making a broad shining white line between sea and sky. It was evidently drifting more from the east coast of Greenland than from Davis's Straits; and about an hour afterwards the brig encountered it, and sailed right through the loose floating masses.

On the morrow, at daybreak, a ship was descried, which proved to be the *Valkyrien*, a Danish corvette,

going to Newfoundland. The current from the Straits began to be sensibly felt, and Shandon was obliged to crowd sail to get on at all.

He was standing on the poop with his two officers and the Doctor, examining the force and the direction of the current, when the Doctor asked if it was true that this same current was uniformly found in Baffin's Bay.

"Undoubtedly that's the case," replied Shandon; "and sailing vessels have great difficulty in making head against it."

"All the more," said James Wall, "as they fall in with it, both on the east side of America, and on the west side of Greenland."

"Well, then," said the Doctor, "that is quite an argument in favour of a North-West passage. This current travels at the rate of about five miles an hour, and one can hardly suppose it has *its* origin in the bottom of the bay."

"Here is another fact to confirm your reasoning. This current goes from north to south; but in Behring's Straits there is a contrary current going from south to north, which must be the origin of this."

"That certainly proves that America is completely detached from the Polar regions, and that the waters of the Pacific flow round its coast, and fall into the Atlantic. Besides, the superior elevation of the Pacific makes it all the more likely that the European seas would be fed by its waters."

"But, surely," said Shandon, "there must be some facts to support this theory. Hasn't our learned Doctor any to tell us?" he added, half ironically.

"Oh, yes!" said Clawbonny, with a good-humoured air of complacency, "I could tell you this, which may interest you, that whales which have been wounded in Davis's Straits have been captured subsequently on the coast of Tartary with the European harpoon still sticking in their sides."

"And since they have neither doubled Cape Horn nor the Cape of Good Hope, they must have got round North America. That is proof positive, Doctor."

"If you're not convinced yet, my good Shandon, I can bring forward other facts, such as the drift-wood which so abounds in Davis's Straits—larches, and aspens, and tropical substances. Now, we know that the Gulf Stream would prevent this drift-wood from entering; if it comes out there, it must have got in by Behring's Straits, for there is no other way."

"I am quite satisfied, Doctor; one couldn't be long incredulous with you."

"Look out!" exclaimed Johnson; "here comes something quite *à propos* to our conversation. I see a jolly-sized log of wood floating there, and I propose we fish it up, with our chief officer's leave, and ask what country it comes from."

Shandon agreed, and soon after the log was hauled up on board, though with considerable difficulty. It was

a trunk of mahogany, worm-eaten to the very centre, which accounted for its floating.

"Here's a triumphant proof," exclaimed the Doctor, enthusiastically. "Since it cannot have been carried into Davis's Straits by the Atlantic currents, and since it cannot have been driven into the Polar basin by any of the North American rivers, seeing that it grew just below the Equator, it is evident it comes in a direct line from Behring's Straits. Besides, look at the worms. They belong to a species peculiar to the tropics. Listen, I'll tell you the whole history of this log. It was carried into the Pacific Ocean by some river, from the Isthmus of Panama or Guatemala. From thence it was borne along by the current into Behring's Straits, and driven out into the Polar Sea. I should assign rather a recent date to its departure, for it is neither old enough nor soaked enough to have been long on the road. After getting through Baffin's Bay, past that long succession of straits, it was violently caught up by the Polar current, and brought through Davis's Straits, to take its place on board the *Forward*, for the special delectation of Dr. Clawbonny, who now craves permission to keep a piece of it as a specimen."

"By all means," said Shandon; "but allow me to tell you that you are not the only possessor of a waif like this. The Danish governor of the Isle of Disko, on the coast of Greenland——"

"I know," said the Doctor. "He has a table made of a trunk picked up in similar circumstances. I know

all about it, Shandon; but I don't envy him his table for there is enough there to make me a whole bed-room suite, if it were worth the trouble."

During the night the wind blew with extreme violence, and the drift-wood became more frequently visible. It was a time of the year when any approach to the shore would be dangerous, as the icebergs are very numerous. Shandon therefore gave orders to lessen sail, and take in all that was not absolutely necessary.

The next business was to give out warm clothing for the crew, as the thermometer went down below freezing point. Each man received a woollen jacket and trousers, a flannel shirt, and wadmél stockings, like those worn by the Norwegian peasants. Each man was also provided with a pair of perfectly waterproof sea-boots.

As for "Captain," he was quite contented with his natural covering. He did not seem to feel the change of temperature, and, likely enough, had been accustomed to it before. Moreover, a born Dane can hardly complain of cold; and "Captain" was wise enough not to expose himself much; he was seldom visible, generally stowing himself away in the darkest recesses of the ship.

Towards evening, through a rift in the fog, the coast of Greenland was indistinctly visible—the Doctor just caught a glimpse through the glass, of peaks and glaciers, and then the fog closed over it again, like the curtain falling at the theatre at the most interesting part of the play.

On the 20th of April the *Forward* sighted a fallen iceberg, a hundred and fifty feet high. It had been in the same place from time immemorial, and had become firmly fixed below; as, for every foot above water, an iceberg has nearly two below, which reckoning would give this a depth of about eighty fathoms. No thaw seemed to have affected it, or touched its strange outlines. It was seen by Snow; by James Ross, in 1829, who made an exact drawing of it; and by Lieutenant Bellot, in 1851. The Doctor, of course, was anxious to carry away some souvenir of an ice mountain so celebrated, and succeeded in sketching it very successfully.

At last Cape Farewell came in sight, and the *Forward* arrived on the day fixed, amidst snow and fog, with the temperature at 12°. If the unknown captain should chance to turn up here, he certainly could not complain.

"Here we are, then," said the Doctor, "at this famous cape! Well named it is, for many have reached it like us who never saw it more. Do we, indeed, say farewell to our friends in Europe? Frobisher, Knight, Barlow, Vaughan, Scroggs, Barentz, Hudson, Blosseville, Franklin, Crozier, Bellot—all passed this way, never to return! For them it was indeed a Cape Farewell."

All the past history of Greenland rose up to memory, as the Doctor stood gazing dreamily over the side of the ship, watching the deep furrow she made in ploughing the waves, and imagination peopled

the icy, desolate shore with pale shadows of the many bold adventurers who had found a grave and winding sheet in the snow.

CHAPTER VII.

DAVIS'S STRAITS.

DURING the day the *Forward* bored her way easily through the loose ice. The wind was favourable, but the temperature very low, owing to the passage of the air currents over the ice-fields.

The night was the most trying time, requiring the utmost vigilance. The icebergs so crowded the narrow strait that upwards of a hundred could often be counted on the horizon at one time. They were constantly being shed off by the glaciers on the coast, through the combined action of the waves and the April weather, and either melted away or became engulfed in the depths of the ocean. It was necessary, also, to guard against coming into collision with the drift-wood, which was floating about in continuous heavy masses, so the "crow's-nest" had to be attached to the topgallant mast-head. This was a cask with a movable bottom, in which the ice-master took up his position, to keep a sharp look-out over the sea. Here he was partially sheltered from the wind, and

could both give notice of any ice that came in sight and direct the course of the vessel through it when necessary.

The nights were short. The sun had reappeared since the 31st of January, in consequence of refraction, and inclined more and more to show himself above the horizon ; but the snow came between, and though not exactly causing darkness, made navigation a work of difficulty.

On the 21st of April Cape Desolation came in sight through the fog. The men were worn-out with fatigue, for they had not a minute's rest since they got in among the ice. It was found necessary to have recourse to steam to bore a way through the close, heavy packs.

The Doctor and the boatswain were standing at the stern, having a chat, while Shandon was in his cabin, trying to get a few hours' sleep. Clawbonny was very fond of having a talk with the old sailor, for he had made so many voyages, and seen and heard so much, that his conversation was always sensible and interesting. The Doctor took quite a fancy to him, and Johnson heartily reciprocated his liking.

"How different this country is from all others," said Johnson. "It is called Greenland, but certainly it is only during a very few weeks in the year that it justifies its name."

"But who knows, my good fellow, whether in the tenth century it might not have been justly called so? More than one total change like that has taken

place on our globe ; and perhaps I shall astonish you considerably when I tell you that, according to Icelandic chroniclers, there were two hundred flourishing villages on this continent eight or nine hundred years ago."

"You astonish me so much, Mr. Clawbonny, that I couldn't believe it, for it is a miserable country."

"Miserable it may be, but for all that it affords enough to satisfy the inhabitants, and even civilised Europeans, too."

"True enough. Both at Disko and Upernavik we shall find men who have taken up their abode in this inhospitable climate ; but, for my own part, it has always seemed to me that their stay there must be a matter of necessity rather than of choice."

"I can quite think that, yet a man can get used to anything ; and the Greenlanders don't appear to me so much to be pitied as the labouring classes in our great cities. They may be badly off, but one thing is certain, they are not unhappy. I say badly off ; but that does not quite express my meaning. What I would say is, they lack many comforts to be found in the temperate zones, and yet their constitutions are so adapted to this rude climate, that they find a measure of enjoyment in it which we cannot even imagine."

"I suppose it is so, Mr. Clawbonny, since Heaven cannot be unjust ; but I have been here many a time, and yet I never can see these dreary solitudes without a feeling of sadness coming over me. And then what names they have given to these capes, and bays, and

headlands ! Surely they might have found something more inviting than Cape Farewell and Desolation. They have not a very cheering sound to navigators."

"I have thought the same thing myself," replied the Doctor ; and yet these names have a geographical interest attaching to them which we must not overlook. They record the adventures of those who gave them. If I find Cape Desolation among such names as Davis, Baffin, Hudson, Ross, Parry, Franklin, and Bellot, I find soon afterwards Mercy Bay. Cape Providence is good company for Port Anxiety ; Repulse Bay leads me to Cape Eden ; and Turnagain Point to Refuge Bay. Here I have before me the whole succession of dangers and disappointments, obstacles, and successes, despairing failures, and accomplished results, linked with illustrious names of my countrymen ; and as if on a series of ancient medals, I read in this nomenclature the whole history of these seas."

"You have certainly made out a very good case for it, Mr. Clawbonny. I only hope, in our voyage, we may oftener come to Success Bay than Cape Despair."

"I hope that, too, Johnson ; but, tell me, have the crew got over their fears at all ?"

"They have partly, sir ; and yet, to speak frankly, since we entered the strait, their heads are full again of this eccentric captain of ours. More than one of them expected him to make his appearance the moment we reached Greenland, and there's no sign of him yet. Between ourselves, Mr. Clawbonny, are you not surprised?"

"I certainly am, Johnson."

"Do you believe in the actual existence of this captain?"

"Most assuredly."

"But what can possibly induce him to act in this manner?"

"Well, if I say what I really think, it is this—the captain wished to get the sailors too far on to be able to back out of the undertaking; and if he had shown himself on board ship when we were going to sail, I don't know how he would have managed at all, with everybody clamouring to know the destination."

"Why not?"

"My stars! if he is going to attempt some superhuman enterprise, and try to push his way where human feet have never trod, do you suppose he would have found a crew at all to go with him? But by going to work like this, he has dragged the men on so far, that going farther becomes a necessity."

"That's very possible, Mr. Clawbonny. I have known more than one bold adventurer, whose mere name would have been enough to prevent any one from joining any expedition led on by them."

"Any one except me," said the Doctor.

"And me, after you, Doctor," replied Johnson. "No doubt, then, our captain belongs to these daring adventurers. Well, we shall see, I suppose. When we reach Upernavik, or Melville Bay, I daresay our brave incognito will quietly instal himself on board, and inform us where he has a fancy to drag the ship."

"I think that is very likely; but the difficulty is to get to Melville Bay. Just look at the ice all round us. There is hardly room for the ice to get through. See that immense plain stretching out yonder!"

"In our Arctic language, Mr. Clawbonny, we call that an *ice-field*—that is to say, a surface of ice which extends beyond the reach of sight."

"And what do you call this broken ice on the other side—those long pieces which keep so closely together?"

"That's a *pack*. If the loose masses assume a circular form, we call it *palch*; and if elongated, a *stream*."

"And all that floating ice, there—has that any particular name?"

"That is called *drift ice*. If it rose higher out of the water it would be *icebergs* or *ice-hills*. It is dangerous for ships to come into contact with them, and they have to be carefully avoided. Look! do you see that protuberance, or sort of ridge of broken ice on the surface of the field? That is called a *hummock*, and is formed by the collision of *fields*. If its base was submerged, it would be called a *calf*."

"Well, it is certainly a curious spectacle," said the Doctor, "and one that acts powerfully on the imagination."

"Yes, indeed," replied Johnson, "for the ice often assumes the most fantastic forms."

"For instance, Johnson," interrupted the Doctor, "look at that assemblage of huge blocks. Couldn't you fancy it was some eastern city, with its minarets and

mosques glittering in the pale moonlight? And then a little way off is a long succession of Gothic arches, which remind one of Henry the Seventh's Chapel at Westminster, or the Houses of Parliament."

"Ay, Mr. Clawbonny, each man shapes those to his own fancy; but I can tell you both churches and towers are dangerous places to live in, or even to get too near. There are some of those minarets tottering at their base, and the smallest of them would crush our brig to pieces."

"And yet men have dared to venture here without having steam to fall back upon. It is difficult to imagine a common sailing ship being able to pick her way through those moving rocks."

"It has been done, however, Mr. Clawbonny. When the wind became contrary, which happened to myself more than once, we anchored our ship to one of those blocks, and waited patiently, drifting along with it more or less, till a favouring breeze allowed us to resume our course again. I must confess, however, it was a very slow fashion of sailing. We did not get on farther in a whole month than we should have done in a day, if we had at all a fair wind."

"It strikes me," said the Doctor, "that the temperature keeps getting lower."

"That would be vexing," said Johnson, "for we need a thaw to loosen these packs, and make them drift into the Atlantic. The reason they are so numerous in Davis's Straits is the narrowness of the space between Cape Walsingham and Holsteinberg; but after

we get beyond the 67th deg. we shall find the sea more navigable during May and June months."

"Yes ; but how to reach it is the question."

"That's it, Mr. Clawbonny. In June and July we should have found the passage open, as the whalers do; but our orders were positive—we were to arrive here in April. That makes me think that our captain is some thorough 'go-ahead' fellow who has got an idea in his head, and is determined to carry it out. He would not have started so soon if he had not meant to go a long way. Well, if we live we shall see."

The Doctor was right about the temperature. The thermometer was only 6° at mid-day, and a breeze was blowing from the south-west, which, though it cleared the sky, considerably impeded the course of the ship, as the strong current it produced drove the loose, heavy masses of ice right across her bows. Nor did all these masses move in the same direction. Some—and those the largest among them—floated in an exactly opposite direction, obeying a counter-current below.

It is easy to understand what difficulty this caused in navigation. The engineers had not a single moment's rest. Sometimes a lead or opening was discovered in an ice-field, and the brig had to strain her utmost to get into it. Sometimes she had to race with an iceberg to prevent the only visible outlet from being blocked up ; while again some towering mass would suddenly overturn, and the ship must be backed in an instant to avoid being crushed. Should frost set in, all the accumulation of floe-pieces driven into the narrow pass by the north

wind, would consolidate firmly, and oppose an insurmountable barrier to the progress of the *Forward*.

The petrels and other sea-birds were innumerable. They were flying about in all directions, filling the air with their discordant cries. Amongst them was also a great number of sea-gulls, with large heads, short necks, and compressed beaks, spreading their long wings, and disporting themselves in the loose snow. These feathered gentry quite enlivened the landscape.

The drift-wood was still abundant, and the logs came dashing against each other with great noise. Several cachelots, or sperm whales, with enormous, swollen heads, approached the vessel; but it was out of the question to think of giving them chase, though Simpson the harpooner's fingers itched to try to spear them. Towards evening, seals were also seen swimming about between the floes, the tips of their snouts just above water.

On the 22nd, the temperature became still lower. The steam had to be at high pressure to enable the *Forward* to gain any favourable leads whatever. The wind kept steadily north-west, and the sails were close-reefed.

Being Sunday, the sailors had less work. After morning service, which was read by Shandon, the crew occupied themselves in shooting guillemots, a species of sea turtle-doves. They caught a great number, which were dressed according to Clawbonny's receipt, and furnished an agreeable addition to the ordinary fare of both officers and men.

At three o'clock in the afternoon the *Forward* reached Kin of Zaal, and the Sukkertop, or Sugarloaf—a wild, lonely peak, rising 3000 feet above the shore. There was a heavy swell in the sea, and from time to time a dense fog would suddenly overspread the grey sky. However, at noon the observations had been taken, and it was found that the lat. was $65^{\circ} 20'$, and long. $54^{\circ} 22'$. Two degrees higher had therefore to be made before a more open sea could be reached.

For the three following days it was one continuous struggle with the floes. It was a fatiguing business to work the engine: the steam was stopped or driven back every minute, and escaped hissing from the valves.

While the fog lasted, the approach of icebergs could only be known by the hollow detonations produced by the avalanches. The brig had to turn about at once, for there was danger of coming into collision with fresh-water blocks, as hard as rock, and remarkable for their crystal transparency. Shandon took care to replenish his supply of water by shipping several tons of these every day.

The Doctor could never get accustomed to the optical illusions caused by refraction. For instance, an iceberg twelve miles off looked like a little white mass quite close; and his eye needed long training to enable him to judge objects correctly in a region where a phenomenon like this was of frequent occurrence.

At length, what with towing the brig along in fields, and driving back threatening blocks with long poles, the

crew were completely worn out, and yet on Friday, the 27th of April, the *Forward* was still outside the Polar circle. 3/1 8.5

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT THE CREW THOUGHT ABOUT IT.

By watching his chance, however, and taking advantage of every favourable lead, the *Forward* managed to gain a little ground, but instead of avoiding the enemy, it was evident that direct attack would soon be necessary, for ice-fields, many miles in extent, were approaching, and as these masses when in motion represent a pressure of more than ten millions of tons, great care was requisite to avoid nippings, that is, getting crushed in among them on both sides of the ship. The saws were ordered to be brought up and placed in readiness for immediate use.

It was hard work now for the crew, and some began to grumble loudly, though they did not refuse to obey, while others took things as they came with philosophic indifference.

"I couldn't tell for my life what brings it into my head just this moment," said Bolton, gaily, "but I can't help thinking of a jolly little grog-shop in Water Street, where a fellow can make himself very comfort-

able with a glass of gin and a bottle of porter. You can see it too, quite plain, can't you, Gripper?"

"Speak for yourself," said Gripper, in the surly tone he generally adopted. "I can see nothing of the sort."

"It's only a way of speaking, Gripper; of course I didn't suppose that those ice-cities which Mr. Claw-bonny so admires have even one solitary little public-house in them, where a brave Jack Tar can get a tumbler or two of brandy."

"You may be quite sure of that, Bolton; and for that matter you might add, there is nothing even to be had on board to keep a poor fellow's heart up. A queer idea, certainly, to forbid spirits to Arctic sailors!"

"I can't see that," said Garry, "for you remember what the Doctor said, that it was absolutely necessary to avoid all stimulants if a man wished to go far north, and keep well and free from scurvy."

"But I have no wish to go far north, Garry. I think it is all lost labour, even coming this length. I can't see the good of being so bent and determined on pushing through where the Fates are dead against us."

"Ah, well, we shan't push through, anyway," said Pen. "When I think I have even forgotten the taste of gin!"

"You must comfort yourself, my boy," said Bolton, "with what the Doctor said."

"Oh, it's all very fine to talk," said Pen, in his coarse, brutal voice, "but it remains to be seen whether all this stuff about health isn't a mere sham to save the rum."

"Pen may be right, perhaps, after all," said Gripper.

"Pen right!" exclaimed Bolton. "His nose is too red for that, and if this new regimen is beginning to bring it back to its natural colour a bit, he may thank his stars instead of complaining."

"What harm has my nose done to you, I should like to know?" said Pen, angrily, for this was an attack on his weak point. "My nose can take care of itself; it doesn't want your advice. Mind your own business."

hot, angry
 "Come, Pen, don't get rusty. I didn't think your nose was so sensitive. Why, man, I like a good glass of whisky as well as other people, especially in such a climate as this, but if it does one really more harm than good, I am quite willing to go without it."

you were so much of a temper
 "You do without it?" said Warren, the stoker, "but I am not so sure that every one else on board does without it."

"What do you mean, Warren?" said Garry, looking fixedly at him.

"I mean this, that for some reason or other there are spirits on board, and I don't believe some folks in the cabin don't make themselves jolly."

"Pray, how did you know that?" asked Garry.

Warren could not answer; he was only talking for talking sake, as the saying is.

"Never mind him, Garry," said Bolton. "You see he knows nothing about it."

"Well," said Pen, "we'll go and ask for a ration

of gin from the chief officer. We've earned it well, I'm sure, and we'll see if he refuses."

"I advise you to do nothing of the sort," rejoined Garry.

"Why not?" asked Pen and Gripper.

"Because you'll only get 'No' for an answer. You knew the regulation when you signed the articles. You should have thought about it sooner."

"Besides," replied Bolton, who always sided with Garry, "Richard Shandon is not the master; he has to obey like all the rest of us."

"Obey whom, I should like to know?"

"The captain."

"Confound the captain," exclaimed Penn. "Can't you see through all this make-believe. There is no more any real captain than there is any tavern among those ice-blocks. It's only a polite fashion of refusing us what we have a right to demand."

"But there is a captain," replied Bolton, "and I would wager two months' wages that we shall see him before long."

"So much the better," said Pen. "I, for one, should like to say a few words to him."

"Who's talking about the captain?" said a fresh interlocutor.

It was Clifton who spoke—an anxious, superstitious man.

"Any more news about the captain?" he asked.

"None," was the unanimous reply.

"Well, some fine morning I quite expect to find him in his cabin, without anyone knowing how he got there, or where he came from."

"Be off with you," said Bolton. "You seem to think the captain is a sort of Brownie, like those that the Scotch Highlanders talk about."

"Laugh as much as you like, Bolton, but that won't change my opinion. Every day, when I pass his cabin, I take a look through the key-hole, and you see if I don't come and tell you some day what he looks like, and how he's made."

"Plague take him," said Pen; "I suppose his timbers are no different from other people; and if he's going to try and force us where we don't want to go, he'll soon show us what stuff he is made of."

"That's pretty good," said Bolton. "Here's Pen, who doesn't even know the man, wanting to pick a quarrel with him directly."

"Doesn't know him?" returned Clifton; "that remains to be proved."

"What do you mean?" asked Gripper.

"I know what I'm saying."

"But we don't," was the common exclamation.

"Why, hasn't Pen quarrelled with him already?"

"With the captain?"

"Yes, with the dog-captain, for it comes to the same thing."

The sailors gazed dubiously at each other, hardly knowing what to say or think.

At last Pen muttered between his teeth, "Man or dog, as sure as I'm alive, I'll settle accounts with him one of those days."

"Clifton," asked Bolton, seriously, "do you actually profess to believe that the dog is the real captain? Johnson was only fooling you."

"I firmly believe it," said Clifton, with an air of perfect conviction, "and if you were to watch him as I have done, you would have seen his strange behaviour for yourself."

"What strange behaviour? Tell us about him."

"Haven't you seen the way he marches up and down the deck, and looks at the sails, as if he were on watch?"

"Yes, that's quite true; and one evening I positively caught him, with his fore-paws up, leaning against the wheel."

"Impossible!" said Bolton.

"And doesn't he leave the ship now every night, and go walking about among the ice, without caring either for the bears or the cold?"

"That is true, too," said Bolton.

"Besides, is the animal like any other honest dog, fond of human society? Does he follow the cook about, and watch all his movements when he brings in the dishes to the cabin? Don't you hear him at night, when he is two or three miles from the ship, howling till he makes your flesh creep, which, by the way, isn't a very difficult matter in such a temperature. And, to crown all, have you ever seen him eat any food? He

will take nothing from anybody. His cake is never touched, and unless some one feeds him secretly, I may safely say he is an animal that lives without eating. Now, you may call me a fool if you like, if that isn't peculiar enough."

"Upon my word," said Bell, the carpenter, who had listened to all Clifton's arguments, "it is not impossible you may be right."

The other sailors were silent, till Bolton changed the subject by asking where the *Forward* was going.

"I don't know," said Bell. "At a given moment, Shandon is to receive his final instructions."

"But how?"

"How?"

"Yes, how? that's the question," repeated Bolton.

"Come, Bell, give us an answer," urged the others.

"I don't know how," said the carpenter. "I can tell no more than you can."

"Oh! by the dog-captain, of course," exclaimed Clifton. "He has written once already; I daresay he can manage a second letter. Oh, if I but knew half that dog does, I should feel fit to be First Lord of the Admiralty."

"So, then, the short and long of it is, that you stick to your opinion, Clifton," said Bolton.

"I've told you that already."

"Well," said Pen, in a deep, hollow voice, "all I know is, if that beast don't want to die in a dog's skin,

he had better be quick, and turn into a man, for I'll do for him as sure as my name is Pen."

"And what for?" said Garry.

"Because I choose," was the rude reply. "I am not bound to give an account of my doings to any one."

"Come, boys, you have had talk enough," said Johnson, interrupting the conversation to prevent a quarrel. "Get to work; it is time the saws were all up, for we must get beyond the ice."

"So be it, and on a Friday, too. We shan't get beyond quite so easily," said Clifton, shrugging his shoulders.

From what cause it was impossible to say, but all the efforts of the crew were in vain. That day the *Forward* made no way whatever, though she dashed against the ice-fields with all her steam up. She could not separate them, and was forced to come to anchor for the night.

Next day the wind was east, and the temperature still lower. The weather was fine, and, as far as the eye could reach ice-plains stretched away in the distance, glittering in the sun's rays with dazzling whiteness. At seven in the morning, the thermometer stood eight degrees below zero.

The Doctor felt much inclined to stay quietly in his cabin, and devote himself to the reperusal of his volumes of Arctic voyages; but his custom was always to do whatever was most disagreeable to himself at the time being, and as it was certainly anything but

pleasant to go on deck in such bitter weather and lend a helping hand to the men, he adhered to his rule of conduct, and left his snug warm quarters below, and went upstairs to do his share of work in towing the vessel along. He wore green spectacles to protect his eyes; but from this time he began to make use of snow-spectacles, to avoid the ophthalmia so frequent in Arctic latitudes.

By the evening the *Forward* had gained many miles, thanks to the activity of the men and the skill of Shandon. At midnight they cleared the sixty-sixth parallel, and on sounding, the depth was found to be twenty-three fathoms. Land was about thirty miles to the east.

Suddenly the mass of ice, which had hitherto been motionless, broke in pieces, and began to move. Icebergs seemed to surge from all points of the horizon, and the brig found herself wedged in among a crowd of moving rocks, which might crush her at any moment. The task of steering became so difficult that Garry, who was the best hand at the wheel, could never leave it. Ice-mountains were re-forming behind the ship, and there was no alternative but to bore a way forward through the loose floes.

The crew were divided into two companies, and ranged on the starboard and larboard; each man armed with a long pole pointed with iron, to push back the most threatening packs. Before long, the brig entered a narrow pass between two high blocks, so narrow, that the tops of the sails touched the rock, like walls on either side. This led into a winding valley, full of

whirling, blinding snow, where masses of drift ice were dashing furiously against each other, and breaking up into fragments with loud ominous crackings.

But it was soon but too evident that there was no outlet to this gorge; an enormous block was right in front of the ship, and drifting rapidly down on her. There appeared no way of escape, for going back was impossible.

Shandon and Johnson stood together on the fore part of the vessel, surveying her perilous position; Shandon giving orders with one hand to the steersman and with the other to James Wall, who transmitted them to the chief engineer.

"How is this going to end, Johnson?"

"As Heaven pleases," was the boatswain's reply.

The ice-block, an enormous berg a hundred feet high, was now within a cable's length of the *Forward*, threatening her with instant destruction.

It was a moment of intense agonising suspense, and became so unbearable that the men flung down their poles in spite of Shandon's commands, and hurried to the stern.

Suddenly a tremendous noise was heard, and a perfect water-spout broke over the deck. An enormous wave upheaved the ship, and the men cried out in terror, all but Garry, who stood up quietly at the helm, and kept the vessel in the right course, notwithstanding the frightful lurch she made.

But when the men recovered themselves a little, and ventured to look the gigantic foe again in the face, it was

gone ! The whole berg had completely disappeared, the pass was free, and there was a long channel beyond, lighted up by the oblique rays of the sun, which offered an uninterrupted passage to the *Forward*.

"Well, Mr. Clawbonny," said Johnson, "how do you explain this phenomenon ?"

"It is one that often occurs, and is very simple, my good friend," replied the Doctor. "When these floating icebergs become detached at the time of the thaw, they sail separately along and preserve their equilibrium perfectly, but as they gradually drift farther south, where the water is relatively warmer, they begin to melt and get undermined at the base, and the moment comes when their centre of gravity is displaced, and down they go. If this had happened, however, but two minutes later, it would have fallen on the ship and crushed her to atoms."

CHAPTER IX.

A LETTER.

THE Polar circle was entered at last. The *Forward* passed Holsteinberg at twelve o'clock on the 30th of April. Picturesque mountain scenery appeared on the eastern horizon, and the sea was open and free from icebergs, or rather any icebergs that were visible could easily

be avoided. The wind was in the S.E., and bore along the brig in full sail up Baffin's Bay.

The weather was unusually calm, and the crew were able to indulge in a little rest, while the Doctor amused himself on deck by observing the numerous flocks of birds that came swimming and flying round the ship. He noticed one species with white breasts and black throats, wings, and backs, which were most expert divers, able to remain under water full forty seconds.

The day would have passed unmarked by any unusual incident but for the following occurrence, which, strange as it may appear, actually took place.

At six in the morning, when Richard Shandon's watch was over, and he came back to his cabin, he found a letter lying on his table directed thus :

"To the chief officer, Richard Shandon,
"On board the *Forward*,
"Baffin's Bay."

Shandon could not believe his own eyes, and would not even take the letter in his hands till he had called the Doctor and James Wall and the boatswain to look at it.

"It is certainly very strange," said Johnson.

"I think it is charming!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"At any rate," replied Shandon, "we shall know the secret now, I suppose."

He tore open the envelope hastily and read as follows :—

"The captain of the *Forward* is pleased with the coolness, skill, and courage displayed in recent trying circumstances by the crew and officers, and yourself. He begs you to convey his thanks to the men.

"You will please direct your course north to Melville Bay, and from thence attempt to make Smith's Sound.

"The Captain of the *Forward*,

"K. Z

"Monday, April 30th, off Cape Walsingham."

"And that's all!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"That's all," was Shandon's reply.

"Well!" said Wall, "this Quixotic captain doesn't even so much as speak of coming on board now. I infer from this he doesn't intend to come at all."

"But this letter," said Johnson, "how did it get here?"

Shandon was silent.

"Mr. Wall is right," replied the Doctor, picking up the letter which had fallen on the floor, and giving it back to Shandon.

"The captain won't come on board for a very good reason."

"And what is it?" inquired Shandon, eagerly.

"Because he is there already!" said the Doctor flatly.

"Already! What do you mean?"

"If he is not, how do you explain the arrival of the letter?"

Johnson nodded his head approvingly.

"It is not possible!" exclaimed Shandon. "I know every one of the crew; and, if your idea were correct, the captain must have been on board ever since the ship sailed. It is perfectly impossible, I say; for there is not a man among them I haven't seen more than a hundred times in Liverpool during the last two years. No, no, Doctor; your theory is altogether inadmissible."

"Well, then, how do you account for it?"

"Any way but that. I grant you that the captain, or some one employed by him, may have taken advantage of the fog and darkness to slip on board unperceived. We are not far from land, and the Esquimaux kayaks glide along noiselessly between the icebergs. He might easily have managed to climb up the ship and deposit the letter. The fog has been quite dense enough for that."

"Yes, and dense enough, too, to keep any one from seeing the brig; for if we could not notice an intruder coming on deck, it is not very likely he would be able to discover the vessel."

"I think that too," said Johnson. "What do you say, Mr. Shandon?"

"Anything you like, except that he is one of the crew," said Shandon, in an excited manner.

"Perhaps it is one of the sailors who has been commissioned by him," suggested Wall.

"That may be," said the Doctor.

"But which of them?" asked Shandon. "I tell you, all the men have been personally known to me this long time."

"At any rate, the captain will be welcome whenever he chooses to come, be he man or fiend," said Johnson. "But there is one piece of information in the letter at all events. We are not only going to Melville Bay but to Smith's Straits."

"Smith's Straits," repeated Shandon, mechanically.

"It is evident," continued Johnson, "that the object of the *Forward* is not to seek the North-West passage, since we must leave Lancaster Sound, the only entrance to it, on the left. This supposes very difficult navigation for us in unknown seas."

"Yes," said Shandon, "Smith's Sound was the course taken by the American Dr. Kane in 1853; and what dangers he encountered! He was given up for lost for a long time. However, if we are to go, we go. But where? To the Pole?"

"Why not?" asked the Doctor.

Johnson shrugged his shoulders at the bare possibility of such a mad attempt.

"Well, then," said Wall, "to come back to the captain; if he exists, I hardly see any place in Greenland where he can be waiting for us except Disko, or Upernavik, so in a few days at most we shall know better how the case stands."

"But, Shandon," asked the Doctor, "are you not going to tell the men about this letter?"

"With your leave, sir," said Johnson, addressing Shandon, "I say not."

"And why not?"

"Because anything so unheard-of and so mysterious dispirits the men. They are very uneasy as it is about the issue of this strange expedition, but if anything supernatural should occur, it might have the worst possible effect on them, and we could never rely on them when most wanted."

"What is your opinion, Doctor?" asked Shandon.

"Johnson's reasoning seems convincing, I think," was the reply.

"And what say you, James?"

"I incline to Johnson, sir."

After a few moments' reflection, Shandon read the letter carefully again, and then said:

"Your opinion is very sensible, but excuse me, gentlemen, I cannot adopt it."

"Why not, Shandon?"

"Because my instructions are plain and precise. I am told to convey a message from the captain to the crew. All I have to do is to obey orders, however they may have come to me, and I cannot——"

"But, sir," interrupted Johnson, mainly concerned at the disastrous effect of any such communication on the sailors.

"My good fellow," said Shandon, "I can understand your opposition, but I put it to yourself, whether I have any option in the matter. Read the letter. 'He begs you to convey his thanks to the crew.'"

"Well, then," said Johnson, when his love of discipline was thus appealed to, "shall I assemble the men on deck?"

"Do so," replied Shandon.

The news of a communication from the captain soon spread, and the sailors needed no second summons to hear the mysterious letter. They listened to it in gloomy silence, but gave way to all sorts of wild conjectures, as they dispersed to their work. The superstitious Clifton ascribed everything, as usual, to the dog-captain, and said triumphantly :

"Didn't I say that animal could write?"

From this day forward he always took care to touch his cap whenever he chanced to meet him about the ship.

One thing was patent to the observation of any one—the captain, or his ghost, was always watching over their doings, and prudent individuals began to think it advisable to keep quiet, and say as little about him as possible.

By observations taken at noon on the 1st of May, the longitude was found to be 32° and the latitude 68° . The temperature had risen, and the thermometer stood at 26° above zero.

The Doctor was on deck, amusing himself with the gambols of a white bear and her cubs, on a pack of ice frozen fast to the shore. He tried to capture her, with the assistance of Wall and Simpson; but the brute was evidently of a peaceable disposition, for she never showed fight at all, but scampered off with her progeny at full speed.

Cape Chidley was doubled during the night with a favouring breeze, and suddenly the high mountains of Disko rose to view. The Bay of Godavhn, where the Governor-General of the Danish settlements resided, was left on the right.

Isle Disko is also called Whale Island. It was from this place that Sir John Franklin wrote his last letter to the Admiralty, on the 12th of July, 1845, and it was there that McClintock touched on his return, on the 27th of August, 1859, bringing incontestable proofs of the loss of the expedition.

The shore was one continuation of icebergs, of the most peculiar fantastic shapes, so firmly cemented to the coast that the most powerful thaws had been unable to detach them.

Next day, about three o'clock, they sighted Sanderson Hope, to the N.E. Land was on the starboard side, about fifteen miles off, the mountains looking brownish-red in the distance. In the course of the evening, several whales of the species called *finners*, which have their fins on the back, were seen disporting themselves among the ice, blowing out large volumes of air and water through the apertures in the head.

During the night of the 5th of May, the Doctor observed the luminous disc of the sun, for the first time, appear completely above the horizon, though from the 31st of January there had been constant daylight.

To those who are not accustomed to it, there is something in this continual day which excites wonder.

ment at first, but soon gives place to weariness. One would hardly believe how necessary the darkness of night is for the preservation of the sight. The Doctor felt the constant glare positively painful, intensified as it was by the dazzling reflection of the ice.

On the 5th of May the *Forward* passed the seventy-second parallel. Two months later, she would have fallen in with numerous whalers about to commence their fishing, but at present the Straits were not free enough to allow their vessels to get into Baffin's Bay.

The next day the brig arrived in sight of Upernavik, the most northerly of the Danish settlements on the coast.

CHAPTER X.

PERILOUS NAVIGATION.

SHANDON, Dr. Clawbonny, and Johnson, accompanied by Foker and Strong, the cook, got into the whaling-boat, and went on shore.

The Governor, with his wife and five children, came courteously to meet their visitors. Dr. Clawbonny knew enough Danish to establish friendly relations between them, and Foker, the ice-master, who was also interpreter, knew about twenty words of the Esquimaux

tongue, and a good deal can be done with twenty words if one is not very ambitious.

The Governor was born in Isle Disko, and had never been out of it in his life. He did the honours of his town, composed of three wooden houses for himself and the three Lutheran ministers, a school, and a few shops, which were stocked by shipwrecked vessels. The rest of the town consisted of snow-huts, with one single opening, into which the Esquimaux crawled on all-fours.

A great part of the inhabitants had gone out to meet the *Forward*, and more than one advanced as far as the middle of the bay in his kayak.

The Doctor knew that the word *esquimaux* means *eater of raw fish*, but he also knew that this name is considered an insult by the natives; and he therefore took care to call them "Greenlanders."

And yet their oily sealskin clothes and boots, and the greasy, foetid smell of both men and women—for one sex is hardly distinguishable from the other—told plainly enough the description of food on which they lived, as well as the disease of leprosy which prevailed to some extent among them, as it does among most ichthyophagous races, though it did not affect their health.

The Lutheran clergyman and his wife, with whom the Doctor was anticipating some pleasant intercourse, were on a visitation in the south, below Upernavik, so he was obliged to make the best of the Governor. This worthy functionary was not very lettered; a little less

intelligence would have made him an ass ; a little more, and he would have known how to read.

However, the Doctor managed to put many inquiries to him about the habits and manners of the Esquimaux, and how they traded. He learnt, through sundry signs and gestures, that seals were worth forty pounds in Copenhagen, a bear's skin forty Danish dollars, a blue fox-skin four, and a white two or three dollars.

The Doctor also wished to make a personal inspection of an Esquimaux hut, but, fortunately for him, the entrance was too small to allow of his admission. It was a happy escape, for nothing can be more repulsive than the interior of a Greenland hut, with its heap of dead and living things, seal-flesh, and Esquimaux rotten fish, and stinking garments ; not even a solitary window to purify the air ; nothing but a hole at the top, which allows the smoke to escape, but not the foetid smell.

Foker described all this to the Doctor ; but it only made the good man bemoan his corpulence still more, for he would have liked to investigate the huts professionally.

Shandon, meanwhile, was obeying the instructions of his unknown commander, and procuring means of transport over the ice. He had to pay £4 for a sledge and six dogs, and even then the natives wished to get out of their bargain.

He also sought to engage the services of Hans Christian to manage the dogs, the same young man

that accompanied the McClintock expedition, but found he had gone to the south of Greenland.

But the most important part of Shandon's business was to try and discover whether there was any European at Upernavik waiting for the arrival of the *Forward*. Was the Governor acquainted with any stranger, an Englishman most probably, who had taken up his abode in this region? When had he last had any intercourse with whalers or other vessels?

To these questions the Governor replied that not a single stranger had landed on the coast for more than ten months.

It was evidently a hopeless mystery, and Shandon could not help crowing a little over the disappointment of the sanguine Doctor.

"You must own it is quite inexplicable," he said; "nothing at Cape Farewell, nothing at Isle Disko, nothing at Upernavik."

"Wait a few days, and if it turns out there is nothing at Cape Melville either, I shall hail you as the only captain of the *Forward*."

Towards evening, the whale-boat came back to the ship, bringing Strong, the cook, with some dozens of eider-ducks' eggs, twice the size of common hens' eggs, and of a greenish colour. His forage for fresh provisions had not been successful, but still the eggs were a very welcome addition to the salt junk.

The wind was favourable next day, but Shandon still delayed weighing anchor. He determined to wait till morning to give time for any one to come on board

that wished, and fired a salute from the cannon every hour to make known the presence of the vessel. It made a tremendous noise among the icebergs, but had no effect beyond frightening the molly-mokes and rotches, who came flying out in clouds. Squibs and rockets in abundance were sent up during the night, but equally without result. There was no alternative but to proceed.

By six o'clock next morning the *Forward* had lost sight of Upernavik and its ugly posts all along the shore, with strips of seal intestines and paunches of deer hanging to dry.

The wind was S.E., and the temperature had risen to 32°. The sun appeared through the fog, and the icebergs began to give way a little beneath his melting beams.

The white, dazzling reflections of his rays, however, had a disastrous effect on the men. Wolsten the gunner, Gripper, Clifton, and Bell, were attacked with snow blindness, a very common disease in spring, and often terminating among the Esquimaux in total loss of sight. The Doctor advised every one, and especially those suffering from the complaint, to wear a green gauze veil, and he was the first to follow his own prescription.

The dogs Shandon had purchased at Upernavik turned out rather wild at first, but they soon became used to the ship, and Captain got on very well with his new associates. He seemed no stranger to their ways, and, as Clifton was not slow to remark,

he had evidently been among his Greenland brethren before.

On the 9th of May the *Forward* came within a cable's length of the most westerly of the Baffin's Isles, and noticed the Crimson Cliffs, as they are called, from the peculiar red tinge of the snow which covers them. Dr. Clawbonny would have liked to make a close inspection of this curious phenomenon, but the ice completely barred any nearer approach to the shore.

After leaving Upernavik the appearance of the coast quite changed. Immense glaciers stood out against the grey sky, and in the west, beyond the opening of Lancaster Sound, vast ice-fields extended, ridged with hummocks at regular intervals. There was great danger of the brig becoming nipped, as each instant the leads got more impracticable. Shandon had the furnaces lighted, and till the 11th managed to pursue a winding course among the loose floes, but on the morning of the 12th the *Forward* found herself beset on all sides. Steam proved powerless, and there was no alternative but to cut a way through the ice-fields. This involved great fatigue, and a mutinous spirit began to manifest itself in some of the crew, such as Pen, Gripper, Warren, and Wolsten. Certainly it was hard labour to saw through huge masses six and seven feet thick, and when this was accomplished it was almost as hard to tow the vessel along by means of the capstan and anchors fixed in the ice in holes made with a centre-bit. The broken ice, too, had to be

constantly pushed back under the floes with long poles tipped with iron, to keep a free passage, and all this physical toil, amid blinding snow, or dense fog, combined with the low temperature, the ophthalmia, and the superstitious fears of Clifton, contributed to weaken the mental and bodily energy of the men.

When sailors have to deal with a bold, intrepid, decided leader, who knows his own mind and what he intends to do, confidence is felt in spite of themselves; they are one in heart with their captain, strong in his strength, and calm in his calmness. But the crew of the *Forward* were conscious of Shandon's irresolution and hesitancy, for, notwithstanding his natural energy of character, he betrayed his weakness by his frequent countermand of orders, by imprudent remarks, and in a thousand little things that did not escape the notice of his men.

The simple fact, besides, that Shandon was not the captain, was enough to make his orders matters of discussion, and from discussion to rebellion is an easy step.

Before long, the malcontents had won over the head engineer to their side, a man who had been hitherto a very slave of duty.

On the 16th May, six days from the time the *Forward* had reached the ice-fields, Shandon had not made two miles farther north. This was a very serious aspect of affairs, for they were in imminent danger of being locked in till the next season.

About eight in the evening, Shandon and the

Doctor, accompanied by Garry, went out on a voyage of discovery over the vast outstretching plains of ice. They took care not to go too far from the ship, for it would have been difficult to find the way back. The Doctor was quite amazed at the peculiar effects of refraction. He came to a place where he thought he had only to make a little jump, and found to his surprise he had five or six feet to leap over, or *vice versa*, a fall being the result in both cases, which, though not dangerous, was painful on such a hard sharp surface.

Shandon and his companions were in search of leads, or navigable openings, and in pursuance of this object, about three miles from the ship, they climbed, though with considerable difficulty, to the top of an iceberg, above three hundred feet high. From this they had an extended view over a widespread heap of desolation. It was like gazing at the ruins of some mighty city, with its fallen obelisks and overturned towers and palaces. It was a veritable chaos, and far as the eye could see, not a single lead was visible.

"How shall we get through?" asked the Doctor.

"I don't know," replied Shandon, "but get through we must, even if we have to blast those mountains with powder. I certainly have no intention of being imprisoned in the ice till next spring."

"As the *Fox* was, just about this very same part," said the Doctor. "Bah! we shall get out, never fear, with a little philosophy. I would back that against all the engines in the world."

"One must confess things don't look very favourable this year."

"That is true enough. The aspect of the regions is much the same as it was in 1817."

"Do you suppose, then, Doctor, it is not always alike—the same to-day as it has always been?"

"Unquestionably I do, Shandon. From time to time sudden breakings up occur, which scientific men have never been able to explain. Till 1817 this sea was constantly blocked up, but in that year an immense cataclysm took place, which hurled the icebergs into the ocean, and many of them fell on the Bank of Newfoundland. From that time Baffin's Bay has been nearly free, and has become the rendezvous of numerous whalers."

"It is easier now, then, for ships to go north?" asked Shandon.

"Immensely so," said the Doctor; "but it has been a subject of remark, that for some years past there has been a tendency in the Bay to refill and close again, an additional reason why we should push on with all our might; though, I must confess, we are much like a party of strangers going through unknown galleries, when each door closes behind as they pass through, and cannot be reopened."

"Do you advise me to go back?" asked Shandon, looking at the Doctor, as if he would read his inmost soul.

"I advise you to go back! No, I have never yet learnt to put one foot behind the other, and I say go on."

even should we never return; only, what I wish to impress on you is this, that if we set to work imprudently, we know the risks we incur."

"And you, Garry," asked Shandon, "what is your opinion?"

"I should go right on, certainly, sir. I agree with Mr. Clawbonny. However, it rests with you entirely. Give your orders, we will obey."

"All don't say so, Garry," was Shandon's reply "All are not in the mood to obey. Suppose they refuse?"

"I have told you my mind," replied Garry, coldly, "because you asked me, but you are not obliged to follow my advice."

Shandon made no response; but after carefully scanning the horizon once more, climbed down the iceberg again, followed by his two companions.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DEVIL'S THUMB.

DURING Shandon's absence the crew had been busily engaged in various attempts to lessen the pressure of the ice. This task was entrusted to Pen, Clifton, Bolton, Gripper, and Simpson, in addition to the two

engineers and the stokers, who had to take their share of work as sailors, now that their services were not required at the engine.

"I tell you what," exclaimed Pen, angrily, "I have had enough of this, and I swear that if the ice does not break up within three days, I'll fold my arms, and not do another hand's turn!"

"Fold your arms!" said Gripper; "you had far better use them to get back. Do you suppose we are inclined to stay here all the winter till next spring?"

"Truly it would be a dismal place to winter in," said Plover, "for the vessel is exposed on all sides."

"And who knows," asked Brunton, "whether the sea will be a bit more open next spring than it is to-day?"

"It isn't a question of next spring," replied Pen; "this is Thursday, and if the passage is not open by Sunday morning, we turn round and go south."

"That's a sensible speech," said Clifton.

"Do you go in for that?" inquired Pen.

"Yes," was the unanimous reply.

"And it is only just," said Warren; "for if we are obliged to work in this fashion, and tow the ship along by main force, my opinion is that our labour would be better spent in dragging it back."

"We shall see that on Sunday," said Wolsten.

"Let me get orders," said Brunton, "and I'll soon light the furnaces."

"As for that," returned Clifton, "we can light them ourselves."

"If any one of the officers," continued Pen, "has a fancy to winter here, he is quite at liberty. He'll find no difficulty in making a snow-hut for himself, where he can live like a regular Esquimaux."

"That's out of the question, Pen," said Brunton, "we cannot leave anyone behind; and, what's more, I don't think the chief officer will be difficult to persuade. He seems very uneasy now, and if we propose the thing quietly to him——"

"That remains to be seen," said Plover. "Richard Shandon can be a hard, obstinate man when he likes; we must feel our way carefully."

"Only to think," said Bolton, eagerly, "that in a month's time we might be back in Liverpool. We shall easily get over the ice-belt down south. Davis's Straits will be open at the beginning of June, and we have only to get right out into the Atlantic."

"We have this to take into account besides," said the prudent Clifton, "that, in getting Shandon to come back with us, we act on his responsibility, and our shares and bounty money are sure; whereas, if we return alone, it is at least doubtful if we get them."

"But suppose the officers will not go back?" resumed Pen, bent on pushing the question to the extreme.

There was no reply for a moment, and then Bolton said:

"We shall see when the time comes ; all we have to do now is to win over Richard Shandon to our side, and I don't think that will be difficult."

"There is ~~one~~ on board, at all events, I'll leave behind," said Pen, with a frightful oath, "though he should eat my arm off."

"That dog?" said Plover.

"Yes, that dog ; and I mean to do for him before I am much older."

"The sooner the better," replied Clifton, never weary of his favourite subject. "He is the cause of all our misfortunes."

"I believe he dragged us into the ice," said Gripper.

"Ay, and gathered it up like this in front of us, for such compact masses are never seen at this time of the year," added Wolsten.

"It is through him my eyes are so bad," said Brunton.

"And through him we have neither gin nor brandy," said Pen.

So the men went on, each one having his own grievance against the dog.

"Worst of all," said Clifton, "he is the captain !"

"A curse of a captain he is too !" exclaimed Pen, in a paroxysm of senseless rage. "Well, he determined to come here, and here he shall stay."

"But how shall we get hold of him?" said Plover.

"Now's our chance," replied Clifton ; "Shandon is

not on board ; Wall is asleep in his berth ; and the fog is so thick that Johnson will never see us."

"But the dog?" interrupted Pen.

"Captain is lying asleep this moment close beside the coal-bunker," replied Clifton ; "if any one chooses to——"

"I'll undertake to get him," cried Pen in a fury.

"Take care, Pen ; he has grinders that can break iron bars."

"If he stirs I'll rip him up," declared Pen, taking up a knife, as he rushed down between decks, followed by Warren, who wished to have a hand in the business.

Both came back presently, carrying the dog in their arms, muzzled and tied up. They had surprised him in his sleep, and escape was impossible.

"Hurrah for Pen !" exclaimed Plover.

"And now what's to be done with him?" inquired Clifton.

"Drown him, and see if he ever makes his appearance again," replied Pen, with a grim smile of satisfaction.

About two hundred paces from the ship was a seal-hole, a circular crevasse made by the animals, out of which they come to breathe at certain intervals, basking on the surface of the ice, retreating below when danger approaches.

Pen and Warren directed their course to this hole, and, in spite of the poor dog's vigorous struggles, succeeded in plunging him into the sea, pitilessly placing an immense block of ice afterwards over the opening, to

deprive him completely of all hope of release from his liquid prison.

"A good voyage to you!" shouted the cruel Pen as he returned to the vessel with Warren, unperceived by Johnson, for in addition to the thick fog the snow had commenced to fall heavily.

About an hour afterwards Shandon and his two companions came back. Shandon had discovered a single lead to the north-east, and determined to take advantage of it. The crew obeyed his orders with alacrity, for three days still remained; and, moreover, they wished to prove the impracticability of proceeding farther north.

Sawing the ice and tracking went on busily during a part of that night and all next day, and the *Forward* had gained two miles.

On the 18th they sighted land, and came within five or six cables' length of a singular peak, called, from its strange shape, the Devil's Thumb.

At the very same place the *Prince Albert*, in 1851, and the *Advance*, with Dr. Kane, in 1853, were caught among the ice and detained for several weeks.

It was a dismal spot. The weird, fantastic form of the towering peak, the dreary, desolate surroundings, the ominous crackings of the glaciers, echoing and re-echoing over the distant plains, and the vast encircling icebergs, some of them three hundred feet high, invested the whole region with peculiar gloom, and Shandon felt no time must be lost in getting out of it. By dint of strenuous efforts, in twenty-four hours he had pushed on

about two miles ; but this was not enough. Yet what was to be done ? He felt as if his energies were paralysed by the false position in which he was placed, and a sort of shrinking fear began to creep over him, for he knew that he could not carry out the instructions of his unknown captain, without exposing the ship to great danger. The men were worn out. It took them more than three hours to cut a passage twenty feet long through floes four or five feet thick, and their health was already seriously impaired. Shandon was also uneasy at the silence of the crew and their unusual zeal ; he dreaded it might be the calm which precedes a storm.

Imagine, then, the painful surprise and disappointment, even the despair, which he felt to find, through an insensible movement of the ice-fields, the *Forward* lost in one night the ground she had gained at the cost of so much fatigue. On the morning of Saturday, the 18th, they were right in front of the Devil's Thumb again, in a more critical position than before, for the icebergs had increased, and passed like phantoms through the fog.

Shandon was completely unnerved. His intrepid heart failed him, and he, like his men, quaked for fear. He had heard of the disappearance of the dog, but did not dare make any inquiry, lest a mutiny should break out.

It was terrible weather that day. A whirlwind of snow and thick mist wrapped the brig in an impenetrable veil. Occasionally the violent tempest would

dispel the fog for an instant and disclose to the terrified gazer the gaunt, spectral form of the Devil's Thumb. Nothing could be done or even attempted except to anchor on an immense floe, for the darkness momentarily increased, and the man at the wheel could not even see the officer on watch at the bows.

Shandon retired to his cabin, a prey to the most tormenting anxieties. The Doctor employed himself in arranging his notes, and the sailors lounged about the deck, or betook themselves to the forecastle. The hurricane increased, and, through a sudden rift in the fog, the Devil's Thumb appeared slowly rising higher and higher.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Simpson, starting back in dismay.

"What's the matter?" asked Foker.

He needed no answer; for terrified outcries were heard on all sides—one exclaiming, "It is going to crush us!" and another, "We are lost!" and a third called loudly for Mr. Wall and Shandon, who speedily obeyed the summons. The Doctor followed, and for a minute all three stood in silent amaze.

It was a most alarming spectacle. Through a partial opening in the fog, the Devil's Thumb seemed quite close to the ship; its size increased to colossal magnitude, and on the summit a second cone appeared, point downwards, as if pivoted on the first, oscillating to and fro, and apparently about to fall on the brig and crush her beneath its enormous weight. Instinctively,

everyone drew back, and several of the sailors jumped down on the ice and left the ship.

"Every man to his post," shouted Shandon, in stern tones. "No one is to leave the ship."

"Don't be afraid, my friends," said the Doctor. "There is no danger. It is simply the effect of the mirage, Mr. Shandon and Mr. Wall."

"You are right, Mr. Clawbonny," said Johnson. "These silly fellows are terrified at a shadow!"

Most of the sailors came back at the Doctor's reassuring words, and fear gave place to admiration, as they stood gazing at the marvellous phenomenon, which only lasted a few minutes longer.

"They call that a mirage," said Clifton, "but take my word for it, some fiend has to do with it."

"That's sure and certain," said Gripper. But the rift in the fog had revealed to Shandon's eyes a favourable lead, and he determined to profit by it without delay. He placed the men on each side of the opening. The hawsers were thrown out to them, and the work of tracking commenced.

They went on for many long hours, and Shandon had the furnaces lighted to use all available means of getting rapidly on.

"It is a providential chance," he said to Johnson, "and if we can only make a few miles farther, we may be out of difficulties. The men are in a mind to work, for they are glad to get clear of the Devil's Thumb, so we will take advantage of their mood as long as it lasts."

All of a sudden the brig ceased moving.

"What's wrong, Wall?" asked Shandon. "Any of the ropes broken?"

"No, sir," said Wall, looking over the side, "but the sailors are all running helter-skelter towards the ship, and here some of them are climbing up the side as if they were out of their wits with fright."

"What's the matter?" called Shandon, coming towards the bows.

"Let us on board! Let us on board!" exclaimed the sailors in panic-stricken tones.

Shandon looked towards the north and shuddered in spite of himself.

A strange-looking animal, with smoking tongue hanging out of enormous wide open jaws, was bounding towards the ship, and had come within a cable's length of her. He seemed more than twenty feet high: his hair stood on end, and his formidable tail, full ten feet long, swept the snow and sent it flying in thick clouds. He was evidently in pursuit of the sailors, and the apparition of such a monster was enough to scare the bravest.

"It is a bear!" said one.

"It is a dragon!" exclaimed another.

"It is the lion in the Revelation!" suggested a third, while Shandon ran to his cabin and seized a loaded pistol. The Doctor armed himself with a revolver, and stood ready to fire at the huge animal, who seemed, from his enormous size, to belong to the antediluvian world.

The beast came nearer, making tremendous leaps, and Shandon and the Doctor discharged their weapons simultaneously. An unlooked-for result followed. The sudden explosion shook the atmosphere and changed the entire aspect of things.

The Doctor burst out laughing, and said, "Refraction again !"

"Refraction !" exclaimed Shandon.

But the crew shouted "The dog ! the dog-captain !" and Pen thundered out, "Ah ! it is the dog, always that cursed dog !"

And the dog it really was, who had snapped his cords and managed to get out on the ice again at another seal-hole.

Refraction, which is common enough in Arctic latitudes, had made him assume these formidable dimensions, while the vibration in the atmosphere had restored him to his original proportions. But this occurrence had a bad effect on the sailors, who were by no means disposed to accept a purely physical explanation of it. The strange phenomenon at the Devil's Thumb, and the re-appearance of the dog under such peculiar circumstances, brought things to a climax, and loud murmurings were heard on all sides.

CHAPTER XII.

CAPTAIN HATTERAS.

THE *Forward* steamed rapidly along through the open channel. Johnson took the wheel himself, and Shandon kept a vigilant look-out on the horizon. His joy was of short duration, for he soon saw that the channel terminated in a circle of mountains.

However, he determined to go and take his chance, rather than turn back.

The dog ran beside the brig on the ice, but kept a good distance off. Strangely enough, however, if he got too far behind, a peculiar whistle was heard, which recalled him immediately.

The first time this whistle was noticed, the sailors were all on deck. They looked about, but no stranger could be seen far or near, and yet the whistle was distinctly repeated several times.

Clifton was the first to sound an alarm.

"Do you hear that?" he asked; "and, look, how the animal bounds along when he is called."

"It is quite incredible," replied Gripper.

"This finishes it," exclaimed Pen. "I'll go no farther."

"Pen is right," said Brunton. "It is tempting Heaven."

"Tempting the fiend!" replied Clifton. "I'd rather lose my share than go another step."

"We shall never return," said Bolton, in a dejected tone.

It was clear the crew were ripe for mutiny.

"Not another step! Are we all agreed on that?"

"Yes!" was the unanimous reply.

"Well, then," said Bolton, "let us go to Shandon; I'll be spokesman."

Off they went in a body to the poop.

The *Forward* was just entering at that moment a vast amphitheatre, perhaps about eight hundred feet in diameter, without a single outlet save the passage by which they had reached it.

Shandon felt he had imprisoned his ship and himself, but what was to be done? A heavy responsibility rested on his shoulders.

The Doctor folded his arms and silently gazed at the surrounding ice-walls, the average height of which was three hundred feet.

At that moment Bolton came up with his friends, and said in a voice trembling with excitement:

"Mr. Shandon, we cannot go farther."

"You say that to me?" exclaimed Shandon, his cheek crimsoning with passion.

"We say this, we have done enough for our invisible captain, and we have made up our minds to go no farther."

"You have made up your minds? You speak like that, Bolton? Take care."

"Your threats won't hinder us," said Pen, rudely.

Shandon had made a few steps towards this rebellious

crew, when Johnson came up to him and said in a low voice :

"If we wish to get out of this there is not an instant to lose. An iceberg is fast nearing the channel, which may completely block it up, and keep us here prisoners."

After a brief survey, Shandon turned towards the men and said :

"You shall give an account of this conduct to me by-and-by. Meantime, turn about the ship."

The sailors rushed to their posts. The *Forward* shifted rapidly. Fresh fuel was supplied to the furnaces, and the engine worked at high pressure, for everything depended on speed. It was a race between the brig and the iceberg.

"Put on more steam !" shouted Shandon, and the engineer obeyed at all risks, almost endangering the safety of the brig ; but his efforts were in vain. The iceberg had been caught by some deep-sea current, and was bearing down fast towards the passage. The brig was still more than three cables' length off when the berg entered, and, adhering firmly to the ice on either side, shut up the outlet entirely.

"We are lost !" exclaimed Shandon, imprudently

"Lost !" re-echoed from the crew.

"Let each take care of himself !" said one.

"Try the boats !" said another.

"Let's go to the stores !" said Pen. "If we are to be drowned, we may as well drown ourselves in gin."

The general disorder had reached its highest pitch, and broken all bounds. Shandon felt himself powerless.

His tongue seemed palsied, and the power of speech forsook him. The Doctor paced up and down in an agitated manner, while Johnson folded his arms, and maintained a stoical silence.

Suddenly a loud, commanding, impressive voice thundered out the words :

“Every man to his post. Stop the ship !”

Johnson instinctively obeyed, and it was high time, for the *Forward* was steaming along at such a rate, that, before another minute, it must have dashed against the rocky walls.

But Johnson was the only man that obeyed. Shandon, Clawbonny, and the entire crew, even the stoker and the cook, assembled on deck, and they all saw a man coming out of the captain's cabin, the mysterious cabin, so closely locked hitherto, the key of which was in the captain's sole possession. This man was none other than the sailor Garry.

“Sir,” said Shandon, turning pale. “Garry, you—— what right have you to command ?”

“Duk !” called Garry, giving the same identical whistle which had so perplexed the crew.

At the sound of his right name the dog gave one bound on to the poop, and stretched himself quietly at his master's feet. Not one of the crew said a word. The possession of the key, the dog sent by him, which now proved, as it were, his identity, together with the tone of command, which it was impossible to mistake, had a great effect on the minds of the men, and sufficed to establish Garry's authority.

Besides, Garry was hardly recognisable. He had shaved off his big whiskers, and his face appeared more impassive than before, and more energetic and imperious. He was dressed now as befitted his rank, and had the air of one used to command.

The crew were quite taken by storm, and, with sailor-like mobility of character, burst out in loud cheers for the captain, who desired Shandon to muster them in order, as he wished to inspect them. When they were all drawn up in file, he passed along in front of them, and had a suitable word to say to each, treating them according to their past conduct.

Then he mounted the poop, and in a calm voice said :

"Officers and sailors, I am an Englishman like yourselves, and my motto is that of Admiral Nelson, 'England expects every man to do his duty.'"

"As an Englishman I am unwilling, we are unwilling, that any should be braver than ourselves, and venture where we have not been. As an Englishman it vexes me, it vexes us, that others should have the glory of penetrating the Arctic regions farther than ourselves. If ever human foot shall tread on polar ground, it must be the foot of an Englishman. See, yonder waves your country's flag! I have fitted out this ship, I have consecrated my fortune to this enterprise, I will consecrate my life and yours to it, but that flag shall float over the North Pole. Have no fear. For each degree north you make from this day you shall receive £1000 sterling. We have only reached the 72nd yet, and there are 90

My name will guarantee my good faith. I am Captain Hatteras !”

“ Captain Hatteras !” exclaimed Shandon.

This name had an ominous sound, for he was well known among sailors as a man who stuck at nothing to gain his end, and had little regard for his own or any other man’s life.

“ And now,” resumed Hatteras, “ let the brig be anchored to icebergs, and order the furnaces to be put out. Each man resume his usual occupation ; and, Shandon, I wish to speak with you in my cabin. I must talk matters over with you and the Doctor, and Johnson and Wall. Boatswain, dismiss the men.”

And who was this Hatteras ?

He was the only son of a brewer in London, who left an immense fortune. He went to sea in early youth, notwithstanding his brilliant prospects. Not that he had any love for the merchant service ; but he had a burning longing after geographical discoveries. Lean and wiry in body, like most men of sanguine temperament, of average height, well-knit frame, and muscles like iron ; with a calm, rigid face, and thin, compressed lips, and cold though fine eyes, he looked the very personification of a man who would stick at nothing. He was one who would never draw back from what he had begun, and who would stake other men’s lives as deliberately as his own. People had need think twice before committing themselves to any of his projects.

John Hatteras had all the pride of an Englishman about him to excess. It was he that said one day to a

Frenchman, who, with true national courtesy, tried to pay him a compliment, by declaring that if he had not been a Frenchman he should have wished to be an Englishman :

"And I, sir, if I had not been an Englishman, should have wished to be an Englishman."

The speech showed the man. His most ardent desire was that his country should have the monopoly in geographical discoveries, and it was a great grief to him that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries England had no place in the glorious phalanx of navigators. True, in modern times she can boast her roll of illustrious names; but that was not enough to satisfy Hatteras : he must needs invent a country to have the honour of finding it. He had remarked the fact, that though the English were far behind in respect of discovery, there was one corner of the globe where their efforts seemed concentrated—the Arctic regions. He was not content with the successful search for the North-West Passage ; the Pole itself must be reached, and he had twice made the attempt in vessels equipped at his own expense. To accomplish this was the one purpose of his life.

After several prosperous voyages in the southern seas, Hatteras made his first venture north by Baffin's Bay, in his sloop, the *Halifax*, but did not succeed in getting higher than the 74th degree of latitude. The sufferings of his crew were frightful, and his foolhardy daring was carried to such a pitch that the sailors had little inclination for another voyage under such a captain.

However, in 1850, Hatteras equipped a schooner,

the *Farewell*, and managed to enlist twenty gallant fellows in his service, but only by throwing out the tempting bait of high wages. It was at that time that Dr. Clawbonny wrote to him, requesting to take part in the expedition; but the post of surgeon was already filled up, and fortunate it was for the Doctor.

The *Farewell* pushed as far north as the 76th degree, but there she was forced to winter. The crew were exposed to so many hardships, and the cold was so intense, that not a man survived but John Hatteras himself, and he was rescued by a Danish whaler, after a march across the ice of two hundred miles.

His return alone produced a great sensation in Liverpool. Who would ever dare to accompany Hatteras again in his mad attempts? Yet he himself never despaired, and his father just then died, leaving him a nabob's fortune.

In the interim, a brig, the *Advance*, manned by seventeen men, and commanded by Dr. Kane, was sent out by Grinnell, an American merchant, to the discovery of Franklin. It got as far, by Baffin's Bay and Smith's Straits, as the 82nd degree—nearer the Pole than any previous adventurers.

The vessel was American, Grinnell was American, Kane was American. This fact was a great grief to Hatteras, and the mortification of being outstripped by the Yankees rankled in his heart. He resolved that, come what might, he would distance them all and reach the Pole.

For two years he had been living in Liverpool, pre-

serving a strict incognito. He passed for a sailor; he discovered the man he wanted in Richard Shandon, and made proposals both to him and Dr. Clawbonny by anonymous letters. The *Forward* was built, manned, and equipped. Hatteras took care to keep his name a secret, for he would not have found a single sailor to follow him. He determined not to take command of the brig unless compelled by imperative necessity, and not till the crew had gone too far to recede. He had also, as we have seen, kept such tempting offerings as glittering gold in reserve, that the poor fellows could not have refused to follow him to the world's end.

And to the world's end, indeed, it was that he vowed to go.

Now that affairs had come to a crisis, John Hatteras hesitated no longer to proclaim himself openly.

His dog, the faithful Duk, who had been the companion of his voyages, was the first to acknowledge him, and happily for the brave, and unhappily for the timid, it was settled beyond dispute that the captain of the *Forward* was John Hatteras.

CHAPTER XIII.

CAPTAIN HATTERAS DISCLOSES HIS PLANS.

THE unexpected appearance of this bold personage did not produce the same effect on all the crew. Some

allied round him, completely attracted by his daring or by the love of money. Others were willing to join in the adventure, while reserving to themselves the right of protest at some future time. Besides, it would be no easy matter to resist such a man. The 20th was on a Sunday, and was kept as a day of rest for all on board.

A council of officers was held by the captain in his cabin, comprising Shandon, Wall, Johnson, and the Doctor.

"Gentlemen," said Hatteras, in the gentle yet commanding tone peculiar to him, "you are aware of my project to reach the North Pole. I desire to know your opinion about it. What do you think, Shandon?"

"My business, captain, is not to think, but obey," said Shandon, coldly.

Hatteras showed no surprise at such a retort, but replied equally coldly:

"Richard Shandon, I request your opinion as to our chance of success."

"Well, captain," was the answer, "facts will speak for me. Every attempt of the kind has hitherto failed; I hope we may be more fortunate."

"We shall be," said the captain. "And you, gentlemen, what do you think of it?"

"For my part," returned the Doctor, "I think your plan is practicable, and as it is evident that some day or other the Pole will be reached by navigators, I don't see why it should not be us as well as others."

"And there are also reasons why it should be so,"

resumed Hatteras ; " all our measures have been adopted with a view to that end, and we shall profit by the experience of our predecessors. By the way, Shandon, thank you for your painstaking care in the equipment of the ship. There are, to be sure, a few black sheep among the crew that I must take in hand ; but, on the whole, I have nothing but praise to bestow."

Shandon bowed stiffly. He felt his false position acutely. Hatteras understood his silence, and did not press him further.

" As for you, gentlemen," he continued, addressing Wall and Johnson, " I could not have the co-operation of braver or more experienced officers."

" Anyhow, captain, I'm your man," replied Johnson ; " and though I must say I think your enterprise a little hazardous, you may rely on me, come what may."

" And equally on me," said James Wall.

" And for you, Doctor, all I can say is, I know your worth."

" Well, that is more than I do," replied the little man, smiling.

" But now, gentlemen," resumed Hatteras, " it is well that you should know on what indisputable facts I base my expectation of reaching the Pole. In 1817, the *Neptune*, of Aberdeen, went north from Spitzberg, as far as the 82nd degree. In 1826, the celebrated Parry, after his third voyage in the Arctic Seas, went also north from Spitzberg a hundred and fifty miles. In 1852, Captain Inglefield sailed up Smith's Sound as far as the 78th degree. All these vessels were English,

and commanded by Englishmen, our fellow-countrymen."

Hatteras paused here, and went on in a sort of constrained voice, as if the words could hardly find utterance. "I ought to add that, in 1854, the American, Dr. Kane, in command of the brig *Advance*, got still higher; and that Morton, his lieutenant, crossed the ice-fields and hoisted the flag of the Union beyond the 82nd degree. Having said this, I shall not revert again to the subject. What I wish to tell you is, that the captains of all these vessels agree in stating that, extending from these high latitudes, there is a polar basin entirely free from ice."

"Free from ice!" exclaimed Shandon; "that's impossible."

The captain's eyes flashed for an instant, but he replied calmly:

"You will please to notice, Shandon, that I am giving you facts and names——"

"But, captain," interrupted Shandon again, "the facts are so contradictory!"

"Wrong, Shandon, wrong," said Dr. Clawbonny; "science goes to support these facts, not to disprove them, as I should like to show you, if the captain will allow me."

"Say on, Doctor," said Hatteras.

"Well, Shandon, listen, then. It is clear, from geographical facts and from the study of the isothermal lines, that the coldest point of the globe is not at the Pole, but several degrees from it. Hence Brewster and

Bergham, and others conclude that there are two points of greatest cold, one in Asia, in $79^{\circ} 30'$ of north latitude and 120° of east longitude; the other in America, in 78° of north latitude and 97° of west longitude. It is this latter which concerns us; and, you see, Shandon, it is situated about 12° below the Pole. Now, then, I ask you, why should not the sea at the Pole be as free from ice as it is in the summer in the 66th parallel, that is to say, to the south of Baffin's Bay?"

"Mere chimeras and suppositions! Sheer conjecture!" replied Shandon, obstinately.

"Well, Shandon, let us consider the case both ways. Either there is a clear, open sea, or there is not. If there is, the *Forward* will sail along without difficulty, if it is all frozen over we shall use our sledges, and so whichever it may turn out, there is nothing to hinder us gaining the Pole. You will allow it is not impracticable; when once the brig gets as far as the 83° , we have only six hundred miles farther to go."

"And what is that!" exclaimed the enthusiastic Doctor, "when we know that a Cossack, Alexis Markoff, travelled along the northern coast of the Russian Empire over the Frozen Sea, in sledges drawn by dogs, a distance of eight hundred miles, in twenty-four days?"

"You hear that, Shandon?" returned Hatteras; "and now tell me if Englishmen cannot do as much as Cossacks?"

"I should think so!" exclaimed Johnson and the Doctor; but Shandon made no reply till Hatteras said:

"Come, Shandon, tell me."

Then all he said was in a freezing tone.

"Captain, I can only repeat what I have already told you—I will obey."

"Wall," continued Hatteras, "let us look now at our actual situation. We are caught among the ice, and it seems to me impossible to get into Smith's Sound this year. This is what we had better do, then."

He unfolded a map and spread it out on the table, and tracing the route with his finger, said :

"Please to follow me. Though Smith's Sound is closed against us, Lancaster Sound is not, on the west side of Baffin's Bay. My opinion is, that we should enter this and go up as far as Barrow's Straits, and from thence on to Beechey Isle. Sailing vessels have taken this course a hundred times, and certainly with our screw it could not be more difficult, at any rate. Once at Beechey Isle, we will get as far north as possible up Wellington Channel, and come out just at the very point from which the open water was visible. This is only the 20th of May ; under favourable circumstances we shall be there in a month, and make it our starting-point for the Pole. What is your opinion, gentlemen ?"

"It is clearly our only course," said Johnson.

"Well, we shall adopt it then, and start to-morrow. Let us make this Sunday a day of rest, and be sure that you attend, Shandon, to the regular reading of the Scriptures with the men. These religious observances have a most salutary effect on the human spirit, and a sailor especially needs to put his trust in God."

"I will see to it," replied Shandon, as he went away with Johnson and Wall.

"Doctor," said the captain, when they were left alone, "that man, Shandon, can't get over his mortification! He is eaten up with pride; I can no longer depend on him."

Next morning a boat was lowered, and Hatteras went round in it to examine all the icebergs in the basin. He noticed during his survey that its dimensions were constantly narrowing, owing to the slow, steady pressure of moving ice, and that consequently the brig would be crushed inevitably before long, unless an immediate breach was made. The energy of the man was shown by the plan he took to effect this.

His first business was to have steps cut in one of the icebergs, and climb to the top of it. From this elevation he saw there would not be much difficulty in clearing a passage to the south-west. He ordered a mine to be dug almost to the heart of the mountain, and in the chamber of this he deposited 1000 lbs. of gunpowder. The blasting cylinders were only adapted for breaking ice-fields; they would have been useless against the towering masses by which the brig was encircled. A gutta-percha tube containing a wick was carried from the chamber to the outside, and the passage communicating was filled up with snow and blocks of ice, which the ensuing night, combined with the action of the east wind, would make as solid as granite.

All this preparation was Monday's work, and next morning by seven o'clock the *Forward* was under steam,

ready to seize the first opening to make her exit. Johnson was entrusted with the lighting of the taper, which was reckoned to burn for half an hour before coming in contact with the powder. This was ample time to ensure his safe return to the vessel, and, in fact, he was back in ten minutes.

The crew were all on deck, and the weather was fine and tolerably clear, for the snow had ceased to fall. Hatteras stood on the poop with Shandon and the Doctor, counting the minutes by his chronometer.

At thirty-five minutes to eight a dull explosion was heard, far less astounding than might have been expected. The outline of the mountains suddenly changed as previous to an earthquake, a thick white smoke rose towards the sky, and long crevasses striped the sides of the iceberg, the summit of which seemed hurled from a distance, and fell in shattered fragments round the *Forward*.

But the pass was not yet open. Enormous blocks of ice remained suspended in the air, propped up by the adjacent mountains, and their fall would only block up the basin still further.

Hatteras took in the situation at a glance, and calling to the gunner, desired him to triple load the cannon.

"What! are we going to attack the mountain with cannon-balls?" asked the Doctor.

"Not exactly," said Hatteras, "that would be useless. No ball, Wolsten, but only a triple charge of powder. Be quick!"

All was ready in a few minutes.

"What will he do without ball?" muttered Shandon.

"We'll see," said the Doctor.

But the brig was too far from the iceberg, and Hatteras ordered the engineer to put the screw in motion. A few turns was sufficient, and the command was given—Fire! A considerable explosion followed, which caused such an atmospheric commotion that the blocks were suddenly precipitated into the sea.

"Put on all steam possible, Brunton!" shouted the captain; "and get right out, Johnson, into the pass?"

Johnson seized the helm, the *Forward* dashed through the foaming waves, and next minute was free. It was a sharp run for her, and she had scarcely cleared the opening before the prison closed again behind her.

It was a moment of intense excitement, and there was but one heart on board that beat quietly. This was the captain's, and the crew, unable to restrain their feelings of admiration for him, burst out into cheers, and shouted, "Hurrah for John Hatteras!"

On Wednesday, the 23rd May, the *Forward* resumed her adventurous navigation, skilfully tacking so as to keep clear of packs and bergs, thanks to her steam, that obedient power that has been so often wanting in Arctic ships.

The temperature was rising. At 6 A.M. the thermometer stood at 26 deg., at 6 P.M. at 29, and at midnight 25. A light breeze was blowing from the south-east.

About three o'clock on Thursday morning the *Forward* came in sight of Possession Bay, on the coast of America, and soon afterwards caught a glimpse of Cape Burney. Several Esquimaux were making hard for the ship, but Hatteras had no time to waste waiting for them. The puffins, and ducks, and white gulls were very numerous; and in the distance the snowy hoods of the Catherine and Elizabeth mountains were visible above the clouds.

On Friday, at six o'clock, Cape Warender was passed on the right, and Admiralty Inlet on the left. There was a strong sea, and heavy waves frequently dashed over the bridge.

Hatteras would have liked to keep along the northern coast for the sake of reaching Beechey Isle sooner, but an impenetrable barrier of ice barred his further progress in that direction, and he was, to his great vexation, forced to go by the south.

This was the reason why the *Forward* found herself on the 26th at Cape York, easily recognised by a lofty and almost perpendicular mountain which overlooks it. The latitude was found on observation to be $74^{\circ} 4''$, and the longitude $84^{\circ} 23''$.

Hatteras opened the map, and pointed out to the Doctor the routes they had been taking and meant to take.

"We are in cross roads, I may call it," he said, "open to the wind on all sides. Here is Lancaster Sound, Regent Inlet, Wellington Channel, and Barrow's Straits."

"It is a wonder to me how navigators know which route to take, when they have all four to choose from."

"Believe me there is little choice in the matter. Sometimes Barrow's Straits are closed one year and open the next, and sometimes there is no passage at all but through Regent's Inlet."

"How the wind blows!" said the Doctor, drawing his hood closer over his ears.

"Yes, the north wind especially; it is so strong as to drive us out of our course."

"Well, but if it does that it surely ought to drive the ice south, and clear the way."

"It ought, but the wind doesn't always do what it ought. Look at that ice-field ahead; it looks perfectly impenetrable, and yet we must try to find some opening, for get to Beechey Isle I must at any rate, to replenish our stock of coal."

"Can you get coal there?" asked the Doctor, in astonishment.

"Most certainly. By order of the Admiralty, great stores were deposited there for the benefit of future expeditions; and though McClintock may have availed himself of them in 1859, there will be some left for us, I assure you."

"The Admiralty always kept five or six ships out here, I believe, till it was proved beyond a doubt that the whole of Franklin's ill-fated expedition had perished."

"Yes, they did. For fifteen years these regions were being explored, and one good result has followed

any way—that is, our knowledge of the Polar Seas has greatly increased.”

“It could hardly be otherwise, seeing the number of expeditions since 1848, when the first alarm was raised about the missing ships, and James Ross set out in search of them. A brave fellow he was, and so thoroughly painstaking. He left not a stone unturned, did he?—dropping every day into the sea a little keg with papers containing the ship’s name and address, firing cannon in the fog, and sending up rockets and burning Bengal fires at night. It was a capital idea, too, to catch that pack of white foxes, and rivet collars on their necks engraved with the same particulars, and also with the whereabouts of the provision depôts, and then let them scamper off in all directions. Strange that the famous McClure and McClintock should both have sailed with him then as officers—one destined to distinguish himself in after years as the discoverer of the North-West Passage, and the other of the precious document that dispelled all doubt as to the fate of the *Erebus* and *Terror*. Since McClintock returned in the *Fox*, not another vessel has ventured to try her fortune in those dangerous seas.”

“Well, we’ll try ours,” said Hatteras, “come what may.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE "FORWARD" DRIVEN SOUTH.

THE weather cleared towards evening, and the shore became visible between Cape Sepping and Cape Clarence. The sea was open towards Regent Inlet, but as if the Fates had conspired against the *Forward's* progress north, there was still an impassable barrier of ice, which shut them out from Port Leopold.

Hatteras, who was extremely annoyed, though he did not show it outwardly in the least degree, had to fall back on his powder again to force an entrance, but he succeeded in getting in by mid-day on Sunday, the 27th of May, and safely moored his brig to great icebergs hard and solid as rocks.

A few minutes afterwards he jumped down on the ice and went ashore, followed by the Doctor and Johnson, and the faithful Duk, who was almost frantic with joy at being on land again. He had grown much more sociable and gentle since his master was acknowledged captain, reserving his animosity for certain folks among the crew, who were no greater favourites with him than they were with Hatteras.

The port inside was unusually free from ice, and the steep perpendicular cliffs were gracefully wreathed with snow. The house and beacon constructed by James Ross were still in a tolerable state of preservation, but

the provisions had been ransacked by the foxes and bears, and showed marks of recent visits from them. Likely enough, two-footed marauders had been there too, for ruins of Esquimaux huts were visible about the bay.

The six graves, marked by little hillocks, where six of the crews of the *Enterprise* and *Investigator* lay buried, remained intact, respected alike by man and beast.

It is impossible to set foot for the first time on Arctic ground without a feeling of peculiar emotion, as one relic and another is discovered, and the excitable little Doctor was almost overcome.

"Look!" he said to his companions; "there is the house that James Ross called 'The Camp of Refuge!'" he shouted; "if Franklin's Expedition had reached this spot it would have been saved. There is the very engine Ross left behind, too, and the stove where the crew of the *Albert* warmed themselves in 1851, looking just as if Kennedy, the captain, had but just quitted the place yesterday! And here is the sloop that sheltered him and his party for several days when they got separated from the ship, and must have perished but for Lieutenant Bellot, who set out to seek them, even though it was October."

"I knew Bellot," said Johnson, "and a brave, noble officer he was."

While the Doctor was pursuing his investigations with all the enthusiasm of an antiquary, Hatteras was busily exploring in all directions for food and fuel,

though he met with small success. The next day was employed in carrying what he had found to the ship. The Doctor meantime continued his rambles, taking care not to get too far away. He sketched a good many of the principal objects of interest, and managed to make a pretty fair collection of the different varieties of Arctic birds. He also saw several large seals, lying by their breathing-holes on the ice, but could not shoot any of them. In one of his excursions he discovered a large stone with this inscription on it :—

[E. I.]

1849.

These were the initials of the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*, a memento left behind of their voyage. He went on as far as Cape Clarence, where John and James Ross waited, in 1833, so impatiently, for the breaking up of the ice. The ground was strewn over with bones and the skulls of animals, and traces were seen of Esquimaux huts.

The Doctor was thinking of setting up a cairn at Port Leopold, with a written statement in it of the arrival of the *Forward*, and the object of the expedition, but Hatteras was so decidedly opposed to leaving any indications whatever of their progress, lest some rival should take advantage of them, that the Doctor had to abandon his project. Shandon greatly blamed the captain's infatuation, as in the event of any misfortune happening to the *Forward* no vessel could go to her rescue.

But Hatteras would listen to no reason, and the moment loading was completed he recommenced his efforts to break through the ice. After many dangerous attempts, however, he was forced to give it up, and go back the way he came, through Regent's Inlet, for he would not winter in Port Leopold for anything. It was open meantime, certainly, but a sudden dislodgment of the ice-fields might close them in any moment.

Hatteras was almost distracted with anxiety, though there was no outward manifestation of it. He had no alternative but to turn his ship and go south, come what might.

Regent's Channel is about the same width the whole extent from Port Leopold to Adelaide Bay. The *Forward* was more fortunate than most ships, for she made an uninterrupted passage through, thanks to her steam, instead of beating about for a month or more, often driven back by contrary winds.

Most of the crew were well content to turn their backs on the north. They had no sympathy with the captain's project of reaching the Pole—indeed, they were almost terrified at him, dreading what next he might attempt, for they knew how little he cared for consequences.

It was evening when the brig came in sight of Edwin Bay, easily recognised by its high perpendicular rocks; and next morning she saw Batty Bay in the distance, where the *Prince Albert* spent her long dreary winter.

The Doctor and Johnson, perhaps, were the only individuals on board who took any interest in the country. Hatteras was always poring over his charts, and hardly spoke a word. The farther south they went, the more taciturn he became, often sitting on the poop for hours together, with folded arms, gazing gloomily on the horizon, and any orders he gave were in the fewest words possible, and in sharp, stern tones. Shandon kept himself aloof as much as he could, and gradually withdrew from all intercourse with Hatteras beyond what actual business required. James Wall was still devoted to Shandon, and faithfully copied his example. The rest of the crew were watching the course of events, ready to take the side that would be best for their own interests. There was no longer on the ship that unity of purpose and interchange of sentiment which is so necessary for the accomplishment of great things. Hatteras knew this well.

Two whales were seen during the day, and a white bear, but time was too precious to waste in pursuit of them, though a few ineffectual shots were fired.

On Wednesday morning the extremity of the inlet was reached, and the brig pursued her course, keeping along the west coast round a point, which, on referring to the chart, the Doctor found was Somerset House, or Fury Point.

"This, then," he said to Johnson, "is the very point where the *Fury* was so broken by the ice in 1815 that she had to be abandoned, and her crew went on board her consort, the *Hecla*, and returned home to England."

"That is the advantage of having a second ship, you see," replied Johnson; "but Captain Hatteras is not the man to be fettered with a companion!"

"Do you think that it is imprudent of him, Johnson?" asked Clawbonny.

"I? I think nothing about it, Mr. Clawbonny. Stop! Do you see those stakes on the shore, with tattered rags hanging on them, as if a tent had once been there?"

"Yes, Johnson; it was there that Parry disembarked his ship's stores; and, if my memory is correct, the roof of the house he built was made of a topsail, covered over with the running rigging of the *Fury*."

"But that was in 1825. It must be very much changed since then."

"Not altogether though, Johnson. In 1829, John Ross found that little frail hut life and health to his crew. In 1851, when Prince Albert sent out an expedition, it was still standing. Captain Kennedy had it repaired, and that was nine years ago. It would be an interesting memorial to go ashore and examine, but Hatteras is not in the mood to stop!"

"And there is no doubt he is right, Mr. Clawbonny. If time is money in England, out here it is salvation; and to stop a day—ay, even an hour—might ruin a voyage. Let him act as he thinks right."

On Thursday, the 1st of June, the weather became

milder, the thermometer rising to thirty-two degrees. Summer made its influence felt even in those Arctic regions, and the men were glad to lay aside some of their winter coverings.

Towards evening, the *Forward* doubled Cape Garry, about a quarter of a mile from shore, and went on to Brentford Bay, keeping as close to the coast as possible, for the fog had increased with the heat, and a close watch was necessary for the discovery of Bellet's Strait. It was somewhere in this latitude, but, if closed by ice, so perfectly undistinguishable from the land, that Sir John Ross never suspected its existence even in 1828, and, though he noted down and named the smallest irregularities with the greatest care on his charts, he made this one continuous coast.

It was Captain Kennedy who really discovered the Straits in 1852, and called them after the French officer, as a just tribute of gratitude for the important services he had rendered the expedition. ✓

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAGNETIC POLE

THE nearer Hatteras approached the Strait, the more his anxiety increased. He felt the fate of his voyage was about to be decided, for though he had outstripped

all his predecessors up to this time, as even McClintock, the most fortunate of them, had taken fifteen months to reach the same place, it mattered little, indeed nothing, if he could not succeed in getting through Bellot's Strait.

He would trust the look-out to no one, but went up to the "crow's-nest" himself, and stayed there the greater part of Saturday morning.

The crew understood perfectly their critical position, and preserved an unbroken silence. The engine had slackened speed, and the brig kept to the shore as closely as possible; but it needed a practised eye to discover the least opening among those close packs.

Hatteras was comparing his charts and the coast. The sun broke out for a brief instant before noon, and Shandon and Wall managed to take a pretty correct observation, which they reported aloud to Hatteras.

It was a trying morning for all; but at last, about two o'clock, a cry resounded from the mast-head:

"To the west, and put on steam!"

The brig instantly obeyed. She turned her prow in the given direction, and rushed forward between two ice-streams.

The entrance was found, and Hatteras gave up his post to the ice-master, and came down on the poop.

"Well, captain," said the Doctor, "we have actually entered this famous strait at last."

"Yes," replied Hatteras, lowering his voice, "but it is not enough to enter, we have to get out again."

Without another word he turned, and walked off to his cabin.

"He is right," said the Doctor, "for we are in a mouse-trap, without much room to do anything; and if we are blocked in for the winter, well, we are not the first that have got into this same fix, and they got out, so I suppose we shall!"

The Doctor was right. It was in that very place that McClintock wintered in 1858, and the little dock was then in sight where he found shelter, and which he called Port Kennedy.

Bellot's Strait is about a mile wide and seventeen long, with a current running from six to seven knots. It is encased in mountains calculated at 1600 feet high. The *Forward* had to proceed cautiously, but still she made progress. Storms are frequent in such a narrow space, and the brig did not escape heavy seas and strong squalls of wind. In spite of every precaution taken by the captain in reefing and lowering masts and sails, it was a fatiguing strain on the ship. It was impossible almost to stand on deck, and most of the men studied their own comfort, and went off, leaving Hatteras with Shandon and Johnson. The little Doctor did not feel any more inclination than the sailors to brave the snow and rain, but, acting on his old rule, always to do that which is most disagreeable to him, he went up to bear the others company; and since he could not hear himself speak, and even barely see himself, he was obliged to keep his reflections for his own benefit.

He found Hatteras trying to pierce through the curtain of fog before him, for, according to his reckoning, they ought to have come to the end of the strait by six o'clock; but no outlet was visible, and the only thing that could be done was to anchor the ship fast to an iceberg, and wait till morning.

It was fearful weather; every instant it seemed as if the *Forward* would snap her chains, and there was great danger of the iceberg itself giving way beneath the violence of the west wind, and drifting along, ship and all. The officers were on the *qui vive* the whole night, and felt the gravest apprehensions. There was not only a perfect waterspout of snow, but showers of hail lashed up by the hurricane from the ice-fields; the whole atmosphere was, as it were, bristling with sharp arrows.

Strangely enough, there was a great rise in the temperature during this fearful night. The thermometer stood at 57° , and the Doctor, to his great surprise, thought he saw several flashes of lightning in the south, followed by very distant thunder.

About five in the morning, the weather changed again with astonishing rapidity, and the thermometer fell to freezing point. The wind veered north, and became calm. The western opening of the strait was now visible enough, but it looked entirely blocked up. Hatteras almost doubted whether it had ever been the opening.

However, the brig got under way again, and glided slowly along between the ice-streams, crushing

the edges of the packs against her side timbers. The packs were still six to eight feet thick, and the utmost care was necessary to avoid coming into collision with any of them.

At noon, and for the first time, a magnificent solar phenomenon was observed, a halo with two parhelia. The Doctor took the exact dimensions: the outer corona was only visible for about 30° on each side of the horizontal diameter. The two images of the sun were remarkably distinct. The colours of both the arches were red nearest the sun, and then yellow, green, and very pale blue, fading into white outside.

Old sailors in the Arctic seas generally consider this phenomenon the presage of a heavy snowfall. Should their opinion prove correct, it would place the *Forward* in a still more awkward position. Hatteras felt that everything depended on getting forward without delay. He spent the remainder of the day and the whole of the night following on deck, without allowing himself a moment's rest, seeking for some practicable lead.

But next morning, when the Doctor joined him on the poop, he beckoned him right away to the after part of the ship, where they were quite out of ear-shot, and said:

"We are caught! It is impossible to get any farther."

"Impossible?" asked the Doctor.

"Yes, impossible! All the powder in the *Forward* would not gain a quarter of a mile for us."

"What's to be done, then?"

"Who knows? Confound this weather. It is an ill-omened year."

"Well, captain, if we must winter here, we must—that's all! As well here as anywhere else."

"True enough!" said Hatteras, in a low voice; "but we must not winter, especially in the month of June. Wintering at all is full of moral and physical danger. A crew soon becomes enervated by inactivity, combined with positive suffering, and I had made up my mind not to winter till we were in a much more northerly latitude."

"But Fate decreed that Baffin's Bay should be closed."

"Ay! and it could open for others—for that American!" exclaimed Hatteras, angrily.

"Come, Hatteras," said the Doctor, "this is only the 5th of June. Don't let us despair; a sudden opening may occur. You know the tendency of the ice to separate, even in calm weather. Perhaps in less than an hour there may be a free outlet."

"I wish it may be so, we would soon get through it, and once outside this strait we may be able to go north again by Peel's Strait, or the McClintock Channel. Then we——"

"Captain," said James Wall, interrupting him suddenly, "our rudder runs the risk of being torn away by the packs."

"Well, it must take its chance; I cannot have it removed. I wish to be ready at any hour, both day

and night. See that it is protected as much as possible, Mr. Wall, by avoiding coming into contact with the ice ; but let it remain in its place, remember."

"But——" said Wall.

"I wish for no remarks, sir !" said Hatteras, sternly. "Go."

Wall returned to his post, and Hatteras exclaimed passionately :

"Oh ! I would give five years of my life to find myself at the north. I know no passage that is more dangerous than this, and to increase the difficulty, now that we are getting near the magnetic pole, the compass there is not acting properly, the needle seems getting lazy or foolish, for it is constantly shifting its direction."

"I must confess it is perilous navigation now ; but, after all, every one who joined the expedition knew the dangers he had to expect, so he needn't be surprised."

"Ah, Doctor, my crew are very much changed, and, as you have just heard, the officers begin to set up their opinion. The pecuniary advantages offered to the sailors made them engage in the service ; but the worst of it is, when men join like that, all they care for is to get home again, and be paid as quickly as possible. Then, too, I am not seconded by my officers as I ought to be, Doctor. If I fail in my undertaking it will not be the fault of such and such a sailor, but through the ill-wind of certain officers. Ah, won't I make them pay dearly for it !"

"Hatteras, you are exaggerating."

"I am not exaggerating in the least. Do you believe the sailors are sorry we cannot get north? On the contrary, they rejoice in my difficulties, thinking I shall be forced to relinquish my project. That is the secret of our hearing no grumbling just now. As long as the *Forward* has her beak head to the south, they are all ready enough to work. The fools! They fancy they are always nearer England! But if I succeed in getting north, you will see things change. However, I swear that not a single human being will make me go out of my track. Let me only find the smallest opening to get my brig through, and in she'll go, even if she has to leave her copper bottom behind her."

The captain was destined to get his wishes partially realised, for in the course of the evening, as the Doctor had said, there was a sudden change. The ice-fields cracked and opened, and the *Forward* boldly dashed in between them, crushing the loose ice with her metal prow. She went without stopping all night, and next morning, about six o'clock, got outside the strait.

But what was the captain's secret vexation to find the way to the north still obstinately shut against him. He had sufficient self-command to conceal his despair, and as if the only route open had been the very one he preferred, he sailed down Franklin's Strait; not being able to get north by Peel's Strait, he determined to go round the point and up the McClintock Channel. But he felt that Shandon and Wall were not deceived; they well understood his bitter disappointment.

On the 6th of June, the portent of the halo was fulfilled, for the snow began to fall.

For thirty-six hours the *Forward* followed the windings of the Coast of Boothia, without getting near Prince of Wales Island. Hatteras raised the steam, burning away the coals in a prodigal fashion, always hoping to replenish his store at Isle Beechey. On Thursday he reached the extremity of Franklin's Strait, and again found the route to the north barred against him.

His situation was hopeless now. He could not even go back, for the heavy packs were pushing him continually forward, and what had been open water but an hour before when the brig passed through, was now solid ice.

It was a terrible predicament for the *Forward*, for she could not get north, and yet dared not stop for fear of a crush. All she could do was to flee as if before a storm.

On Friday, the 8th June, he arrived at the mouth of James Ross's Strait, one which he must avoid at any cost, for it had no outlet except to the west, right on the American coast. The longitude here was found to be $90^{\circ} 46' 45''$, and the latitude $70^{\circ} 5' 17''$. On referring to the map the Doctor discovered they had reached the magnetic pole, for this was the very part where it had been discovered by James Ross.

The shore near the coast was flat, rising in the background about a mile from the sea to a height of sixty feet.

Finding that the boiler needed to be cleaned, the captain anchored his brig to the ice, and allowed the Doctor and Johnson to go ashore. As for himself, he felt no interest in anything that was not immediately connected with his projects, and only cared to shut himself up in his cabin and pore over his charts.

The Doctor and his companion were soon on land, carrying a compass with them for their experiments. The Doctor wished to test for himself the accuracy of James Ross's observations. He easily discerned the heap of chalk stones he had set up, and on hastening towards it, perceived through an opening the identical tin case in which he had deposited a minute account of his discovery. Not a single human being seemed to have visited this dreary coast for thirty long years !

If a magnetised needle is suspended here as delicately as possible, it will immediately assume an almost vertical position under the magnetic influence. The centre of attraction then, if not exactly below the needle, must be but a very short distance off.

The Doctor made his experiments with the utmost care, and was more successful than even James Ross, who could never get a higher declination for his vertical needle than $89^{\circ} 59'$, owing to the imperfection of his instruments, while Dr. Clawbonny had the extreme satisfaction of seeing his needle indicate a declination of exactly 90° .

"This, then," he said, tapping the ground with his foot, "is the actual magnetic pole of our globe."

"Is it just here?" asked Johnson.

"In this precise spot."

"I suppose then it is all nonsense to talk about a magnetic mountain, or a mass of loadstone!"

"Yes, my good fellow, it is all 'old wives' fables.' As you see for yourself, there is not a sign of a mountain endowed with the power of attracting ships, and tearing away their iron, down to anchors and nails. Even your boots do not feel any heavier, as if they were dragging you down, do they? You can walk as easily here as anywhere else."

"But how can it be explained?"

"It can't be explained. We are not learned enough for that yet. But this one thing is an ascertained mathematical fact—the magnetic pole is here, in this very place."

"Ah! Mr. Clawbonny, what would the captain give if he could say as much of the North Pole?"

"He will say it some day, Johnson, that he will."

"I fervently hope he may."

Just at this moment the signal was made for their return, and after hastily erecting a cairn to mark the exact spot, they hurried back to the brig.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STORY OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

THE *Forward* succeeded in cutting right across the James Ross's Strait, but it was only done by dint of

saws and petards, and at the cost of great fatigue to the crew. Fortunately the temperature was bearable, 30° higher than James Ross had found it at the same time of the year. The thermometer stood at 34°.

On Saturday, Cape Felix was doubled, at the extreme point of King William's Island. The sight of this island made a deep impression on the minds of the men, and they gazed with mournful interest at the coast as they sailed along. This was the theatre of one of the most terrible tragedies the world has ever seen, for, only a few miles to the west, the *Erebus* and *Terror* were lost.

Johnson and the Doctor were going over the particulars of the sad catastrophe as the vessel flew swiftly on, and bays and promontories passed before the eye like some vast panorama. Several of the sailors, overhearing the subject of conversation, drew nearer to listen, and before long the Doctor had the whole crew round him. Seeing their eager curiosity, and knowing what an impression the recital would make in such circumstances, the Doctor recommenced his narrative.

"You know, I suppose, my good fellows," he said, "the early history of Franklin. He was a cabin-boy, like Cook and Nelson, and, after serving during his youth in several great expeditions, he determined, in 1845, to prosecute a search for the North-West Passage. He was in command of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, two ships that had been previously employed in an Arctic expedition undertaken by James Ross. The

Erebus carried seventy sailors, including the officers, with Fitz-James as captain; Gore and Vesconte as lieutenants; Des Vœux, Sargent, and Couch as quartermasters; and Stanley as surgeon. The *Terror* numbered sixty-eight men. Her captain was Crozier; the lieutenants, Little, Hodgson, and Irving; quartermasters, Horesby and Thomas; and surgeon, Peddie. Not one of these ill-fated individuals ever returned to their native land, but you may read nearly all their names on the different bays, and capes, and straits, and points, and channels, and islands that are met with in this region. There were 138 men altogether. The last letters received from Franklin were dated July 12th, 1845, and written from Isle Disko. 'I hope,' he wrote, 'to weigh anchor to-night for Lancaster Sound.' What has happened since his departure from Disko? The last time the ships were seen was in Melville Bay, by the captains of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Enterprise*, two whalers; and since then there has been no word of them. We are able to follow Franklin, however, in some of his subsequent movements. He went to the west, and up Barrow's Strait and Lancaster Sound, as far as Isle Beechey, where he spent the winter of 1845."

"But how was that ascertained?" asked Bell, the carpenter.

"By three graves discovered by the Austin expedition in 1850, in which three of Franklin's sailors were interred; and also by a document found by Lieutenant Hobson, of the *Fox*, which is dated 1848. From this

we learn that, at the close of the winter, the *Erebus* and *Terror* went up Wellington Channel as far as the 77th parallel; but, instead of continuing their route to the north, which was doubtless found to be impracticable, they returned south."

"And it was their ruin," said a grave voice. "Salvation was in the north."

Every one turned to see who was the speaker. It was Hatteras, leaning against the railing of the poop, who made his home-thrust at the crew.

"There is no doubt," continued the Doctor, "that Franklin's intention was to reach the American coast; but he was overtaken by furious tempests, and both ships got caught in the ice a few miles from this, and were dragged N.N.E. of Point Victory. But the ships were not abandoned till the 22nd April, 1848. What happened during those nineteen months, who knows? What did the poor fellows do with themselves all that time? No doubt they explored the country, and tried their utmost to reach a place of safety, for Franklin was a man of great energy, and if his measures were unsuccessful——"

"It was, perhaps, his crew who proved false to him?" again interrupted Hatteras, in a hollow voice.

No one dared to look up, for the cap fitted. The Doctor resumed his narrative, and said:

"The document I have mentioned gives the additional information of the death of Sir John Franklin. He sank under his fatigues on the 11th of June, 1847.

Honour to his memory," he added, baring his head respectfully.

All the men silently followed his example. After a pause, Doctor Clawbonny went on to say :

"What became of the men after their admiral's death? Ten months elapsed before they forsook the ship, and the survivors then numbered one hundred and five men. Thirty-three were dead! A cairn was erected on Point Victory by order of the captains, Crozier and Fitz-James, and in it this their last document was deposited. See, we are just passing the very place. You can still see the remains of this cairn on the very extremity of the point. And there is Cape Jane Franklin, and there is Point Franklin, and there is Point le Vesconte, and there is Erebus Bay, where they found the sloop made out of pieces of one of the ships and laid on a sledge. They also discovered silver spoons there, and tea and chocolate, besides religious books and provisions in abundance. For the hundred and five survivors, under the guidance of Captain Crozier, set out for the great Fish River. How far did they get? Did they reach Hudson's Bay? Do any of them still survive? Who can say what has become of them all now?"

"I can say what has become of them," replied John Hatteras, in loud, ringing tones. "Yes, they did reach Hudson's Bay, and divided into several parties. Yes, they took the route south, and in 1850 a letter of Dr. Rae mentioned the fact that on this very island before us, the Esquimaux fell in with a detachment of

forty men hunting seals over the ice, dragging a boat with them, and looking pale and haggard, worn out with suffering and fatigue. And subsequently thirty corpses were found on the mainland, and five on an adjacent isle, some half buried, and some lying quite exposed ; others under a boat turned upside down, and others still under the remains of a tent ; here an officer, with his telescope on his shoulder and his loaded gun beside him, and not far off cauldrons with the fragments of a ghastly sickening meal.

“On the receipt of this intelligence, the Admiralty requested the Hudson’s Bay Company to dispatch experienced men to search the entire region. They explored the whole of the Back River to its mouth. They visited the islands of Montreal, Maconochie, and Point Ogle. But it was all in vain ! Every one of the hapless company was dead ! Dead from starvation, and pain and misery, after making a horrible attempt to prolong their wretched lives by cannibalism ! This is what has become of them ! The route south is strewn with their mangled remains ! Do you still desire to walk in their footsteps ?”

The thrilling voice and impassioned gestures and earnest face of Hatteras produced an indescribable effect on the men, and, carried away by their emotion, they shouted with one accord :

“To the North ! To the North !”

“To the North, then, we’ll go, my men ! Safety and glory lie there ! Heaven is on our side ; the wind has shifted ! The channel is open, turn about the ship !”

The sailors rushed to their posts, the *Forward* was soon making at full speed for the McClintock Channel.

Hatteras was right, the ice had given way, and the ship found her passage almost unobstructed. On the 14th of June she had gone beyond Osborn Bay, and farther than any of the expeditions of 1851. The ice-packs were still numerous, but she never lacked water below her keel.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ROUTE TO THE NORTH.

THE crew had apparently returned to their good habits of discipline and obedience. Their work was not fatiguing now, and they had abundance of leisure. The temperature still remained above freezing point.

Duk, who had grown quite friendly and sociable, struck up the closest friendship with Dr. Clawbonny. They were on the best possible terms, though it must be confessed Duk was quite master, and made the little Doctor do whatever he pleased. Towards the crew, too, and officers generally, Duk was amiable enough, except towards Shandon, and from him he always ran away as fast as he could, doubtless impelled by some secret instinct. He also kept a sharp tooth

for Penn and Foker; and what a tooth it was! He growled whenever they came near, though they never again attempted to lay a finger on him. No one dared to touch the captain's dog, his "familiar spirit," as Clifton called him.

On the whole, however, the confidence of the men seemed restored, and they were behaving well.

"It looks as if the crew had laid the captain's words to heart," remarked Wall to Shandon one day. "They don't appear now to have any misgivings about success."

"They are wrong," said Shandon; "if they were only to reflect and examine their situation, they would see we are going from one imprudent step to another."

"And yet," returned Wall, "the sea is certainly more open, and we are going on no untried route. Are you not exaggerating, Shandon?"

"No, Wall, I am not; the hatred or jealousy, if you choose to call it so, which I feel towards Hatteras, has not blinded my eyes. Tell me, have you been down to see how the coals stand?"

"No," replied Wall.

"Well, just you go, and you will see how fast our stock is diminishing. The rule with us should have been to rely on our sails mainly, reserving the screw for special occasions when the wind was contrary, or there were strong opposing currents; our combustibles ought to be husbanded with the most rigid economy, for who knows where we may be driven, or how long we may be frozen up in these seas? But Hatteras, in

his frenzied ambition to push north and reach the inaccessible Pole, never troubles himself about such small matters. Whether the wind is for or against us, he must have all the steam up, and if he goes on much longer in the same fashion, we stand a chance of finding ourselves in a pretty fix some day, and even of our total loss."

"If what you say is true, Shandon, the case is serious."

"Yes, Wall, very serious; not merely for the engine, which would be utterly useless without coal, just perhaps when we most needed it; but for ourselves, too, when we think of having to winter here, which we certainly must do, soon or late. One needs to think of cold a little in a country where the quicksilver even freezes in the thermometer."

"But, if I am not mistaken, Shandon, the captain is reckoning on replenishing his stock at Isle Beechey. He can get an abundance of fuel there."

"Can people go just where they choose, Wall, in these seas? Can we ever reckon on finding the straits open? And supposing he should miss the isle, or be unable to get to it, what will become of us?"

"You are right, Shandon. It is certainly imprudent of Hatteras, but why don't you talk to him on the subject?"

"No, Wall," said Shandon, with ill-concealed bitterness, "I have made up my mind to be silent. I have no responsibility now; I shall watch the course of events and do whatever I am told without expressing an opinion."

"Let me tell you, Shandon, you are wrong. This is a question of our common interest, and imprudence on the captain's part may cost us all dear."

"And would he listen, Wall, if I were to speak?"

Wall could not reply in the affirmative. He evaded the question by asking whether the representations of the crew would have more effect.

"The crew!" repeated Shandon, shrugging his shoulders. "Why, Wall, you surely cannot have noticed the men. They are not caring the least about their safety just now. All they know is, that they are getting near the 72nd parallel, and that each degree beyond that will bring them a thousand pounds!"

"You are right, Shandon," replied Wall. "The captain knows the best way to keep his men."

"For the present, at any rate, it is the best," replied Shandon.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that while there is no danger and no hard work, things will go on very well. Hatteras has caught them with a golden bait, but what's only done for money is never much worth. Wait till we get into difficult and trying circumstances; wait till sickness, and cold, and misery, and despondency come upon us, and all the calamities towards which we are madly rushing, and you'll see how few of them will think much of the prize to be won."

"Then you don't think Shandon, that Hatteras will succeed in his attempt?"

"No, Wall, he will not succeed. An enterprise like this requires perfect harmony of thought and feeling among the leaders, and this is wanting among us. More than that, Hatteras is a madman. All his past history proves it. Well, we shall see. A time may come when he will be compelled to give up the command of the ship to a less venturesome man."

"I don't know about that," said Wall, with a doubtful shake of the head. "He will always have some to stand by him ; he will have——"

"He will have Dr. Clawbonny," said Shandon, interrupting him, "a learned man who cares for nothing but learning ; Johnson, a sailor, who is a slave to discipline, and who never takes the trouble to examine a question ; and perhaps one or two others, such as Bell, the carpenter, not more than four at the outside—four out of eighteen of us. No, Wall ; Hatteras has not the confidence of the crew, and he knows that well enough. He bribes them with money. He managed to work on their excitable natures very cleverly with the Franklin story ; but that won't last, I tell you, and if he don't succeed in reaching Isle Beechey he is ruined."

"If the crew only suspected that——"

"I beg you say nothing to them whatever on the subject. They will soon make their own remarks. Moreover, we could not do better meantime than continue our present course. Perhaps, after all, what Hatteras thinks going north may prove going back. McClintock Channel opens into Melville Bay, but that

succession of straits that leads to Baffin's Bay, begins there too; Hatteras had better take care! The road to the east is easier than that to the north."

Shandon's words revealed his secret sentiments. No wonder Hatteras felt he was a traitor.

As far as the crew went, however, his opinion of them was quite right. Their contentment was entirely owing to the prospect of soon reaching the 72nd parallel. The love of money had taken complete possession of them, and Clifton had calculated accurately the sum that would fall to each. There were sixteen men altogether on board, not counting the captain and the Doctor, who, of course, were not to share in the prize. The amount promised was £1,000; that gave £62 10s. to each individual. Should they ever reach the Pole, the eighteen degrees more would enrich them still further with a sum of £1,125—quite a fortune. This would cost the captain £18,000, but he was rich enough to be able to pay it.

On the 16th of June the *Forward* coasted past Cape Aworth. The white peaks of Mount Rawlinson seemed to pierce the very heavens, the snow and fog making its height appear colossal. The temperature was still some degrees above freezing point. Cascades and cataracts were rushing down the sides of the mountains, and the loud noise of falling avalanches struck upon the ear like the continuous discharge of heavy artillery, reverberating over the glaciers for an immense distance. It was a splendid spectacle, and the ship hugged the coast so closely that objects were distinctly visible. Rare heaths

were discovered growing on sheltered rocks, with their pink flowers timidly peeping above the snow. A few miserable-looking lichens of a reddish colour were also seen, and a dwarf willow, which crept along the ground.

At last, on the 19th of June, the 72nd parallel was crossed, and the brig entered Melville Bay—the “Silver Bay,” as Bolton christened it. On the 25th, in spite of a strong breeze from the N.E., she passed the 74th degree, and found herself in Melville Sound, one of the largest in those regions. It was Captain Parry who first traversed it in his great expedition of 1819, and it was for this his crew gained the prize of £5,000 offered by Government.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A WHALE CHASE.

MELVILLE SOUND, though perfectly navigable, was not free from ice. Extensive ice-fields stretched beyond as far as the eye could reach, with solitary icebergs appearing here and there, standing motionless, as if anchored firmly to the glaciers.

But the *Forward* found good leads everywhere, and steamed rapidly along, in spite of the variable wind, which kept shifting from one point of the compass to another.

The sudden changes of the wind are most remarkable in these Arctic Seas. Often, but a few minutes will separate a dead calm from a strong tempest, as Hatteras found to his cost on the 23rd of June, just as he reached the middle of the immense bay.

The most constant winds are those which blow from the polar ice-belt towards the open water, and these are extremely cold. On this day the thermometer sank several degrees, and the wind suddenly veered south. Thick snow began to fall, and such violent gusts of wind arose, that Hatteras ordered all the sails to be close-reefed; but, before his commands could be executed, one of the smaller masts was already torn away.

Hatteras never left the deck while the gale lasted, though the fury of the blast compelled him to change his position. There he stood, issuing his orders with the most imperturbable calmness, though the sea was lashed mountains high by the raging tempest, and his brig was tossed up and down on the waves like a child's toy—now borne aloft perpendicularly on the crest of some gigantic billow, her steel prow gleaming for an instant in the light; and then precipitated into an abyss amidst clouds of smoke, her stern and engine rising completely out of the water; rain and snow all the time falling in torrents.

The Doctor, of course, could not lose the opportunity of getting drenched to the skin. He stayed on deck with the rest, in silent admiration of the grandeur of the spectacle; and he found his endurance well re-

paid by the sight of a peculiar phenomenon, which is only observable in polar latitudes.

The storm raged within certain limits, not extending farther than three or four miles. This arises from the fact that, in passing over the ice-fields, the wind is robbed of much of its power, and its fury is soon exhausted. Every now and then, in a fall of the swell the Doctor caught glimpses of a clear sky and a calm sea beyond the ice. The brig had only to go right forward to get into smooth sailing ; but she ran the risk of being dashed to pieces in the transit. However, after some hours, Hatteras succeeded in getting beyond the storm, though only by a few cable-lengths, leaving it still raging in the distance.

The appearance of the bay was totally altered. A great number of bergs had become detached from the coast ice by the double influence of wind and waves ; and these were scudding along towards the north, crossing and clashing against each other in every direction. They could be counted by hundreds, but the Sound was so wide that the *Forward* found little difficulty in steering clear of them. It was a magnificent sight ; for the moving masses, being endowed with unequal degrees of velocity, seemed like so many runners on a vast race-course.

The Doctor was surveying the scene with enthusiastic admiration, when Simpson, the harpooner, came up, and drew his attention to the changing tints of the sea, from bright blue to olive green. Long bands stretched from north to south, with the edges so sharply

marked, that the line of demarcation could be traced as far as the eye could reach. Sometimes, again, they came to sheets of clear, transparent water, close to others which were perfectly opaque.

"Well, Mr. Clawbonny," said Simpson, "what do you say to this? Isn't it very peculiar?"

"I adopt the theory of Scoresby, the whaler," replied the Doctor. "He thought that the blue waters had been deprived of the myriads of animalculæ and medusæ—a class of zoophytes with which the green waters are loaded. He had made many experiments on the subject, and I quite believe he is right."

"Ay, sir; but there is more than that to be learnt from the colour of the water."

"Is there, really?"

"Yes, Mr. Clawbonny, you may take a harpooner's word for it; if the *Forward* were only a whaler, we should have good sport."

"And yet," said the Doctor, "I don't see the smallest whale anywhere."

"All right! Take my word for it, I say, we'll see some before long. It is a lucky chance for a whaler to come across those green stripes in this latitude."

"And why so?" asked the Doctor, always eager to gain information from those who had a practical knowledge of the subject in hand.

"Because it is in those green waters that most of the whales are caught," replied Simpson.

"How is that?"

"Because the whales find most there to eat."

"Is that a positive fact?"

"Oh, I have tested it a hundred times in Baffin's Bay, and I don't see why it should not hold equally good in Melville Sound."

"I daresay you are right, Simpson."

"Stop a bit!" said the harpooner, leaning over the side of the vessel. "Do you see that, Mr. Claw-bonny?"

"It looks like the wake of a ship."

"Well, that is the fatty substance the whale leaves behind in its track. Trust me, the animal that left it can't be far off."

There was certainly a peculiar smell in the atmosphere, and the Doctor watched carefully to see if Simpson's predictions would be verified.

He had not to watch long, for the man at the mast-head called out:

"A whale! To leeward of us!"

All eyes turned in the given direction; and, sure enough, about a mile from the ship, jets of water thrown up to a considerable height were plainly visible.

"There she is!" exclaimed Simpson. "That's her and no mistake, blowing away!"

"She has disappeared!" said the Doctor.

"She could soon be found, if we wanted," replied Simpson, in a tone of regret.

But, to his amazement—for no one would have dared to propose such a thing—Hatteras gave orders to equip the whaling-boat. He was not sorry to be able to afford his men a little diversion, and perhaps secure a few

barrels of oil. His permission to capture the whale gave great satisfaction to all on board; and, forthwith, four sailors jumped into the boat. Johnson was to steer, and Simpson took his place in the front, harpoon in hand. The Doctor could not be kept from joining the party. The sea was pretty calm, and in ten minutes the boat was at the spot.

The whale had just plunged below again, but soon reappeared, discharging a volume of mucous matter and vapour combined, from the blow-holes in the head.

"There! there!" cried Simpson, pointing to a spot about eight hundred yards from the boat.

The enormous monster rose and sank in the waves incessantly, her huge black back looking like a rock in mid-ocean. Whales are slow swimmers, and this one seemed in no hurry, certainly.

The boat cautiously approached unperceived by the enemy, owing to the opaqueness of the green water. To see a frail bark attack these leviathans is always a thrilling spectacle, and this whale must have measured nearly 100 feet. Larger ones are frequently met with between the 72nd and 80th degrees, and ancient writers speak of some specimens more than 700 feet long; but such descriptions are evidently entirely fabulous.

As soon as the boat got close to the whale, Simpson stopped the rowers, and, brandishing his harpoon, hurled it so dexterously at the foe that the sharp barbs buried themselves deep in the thick layer of fat on her back. The wounded monster dived below, and imme-

diately the four oars were set up on end, and the line let out which was attached to the harpoon. It was lying in a coil at the front of the boat, and the rapidity with which it unwound itself was prodigious.

For more than half-an-hour the boat was dragged along after the whale in the direction of the moving icebergs, and always farther away from the brig. The motion was so rapid that it was necessary to wet the rope to prevent its taking fire from the excessive friction. When the whale at last slackened speed, the line was carefully drawn up by degrees, and coiled up again. Presently the animal rose to the surface once more, lashing the sea with her ponderous tail, and making a perfect waterspout, which fell on the boat like a violent shower of rain.

The men began to row vigorously forward, and Simpson seized a lance, and stood ready for combat. But, next moment, their coveted prey darted in between two gigantic ice-mountains, where it would have been dangerous to follow.

"Confound it!" exclaimed Johnson.

"Go on! Go on!" shouted Simpson, wild with excitement. "We are sure of her now."

"But we cannot go after her between those icebergs!" said Johnson.

"Yes, yes, we can," cried Simpson.

While they were still discussing whether to venture or not, the question was settled for them, for the passage began rapidly to close; and Johnson had only barely time to cut the rope with a hatchet when the

rocky walls met, crushing the unfortunate animal between them with irresistible force.

"Lost!" exclaimed Simpson.

"Saved!" was Johnson's reply; while the Doctor, who had never shown the white feather throughout, coolly said, "My word! but that was a sight worth seeing."

The crushing power of these mountains is prodigious. The whale had met with no unusual death; for Scoresby mentions the fact that, in one summer, thirty whales perished in Baffin's Bay in a similar manner. He also saw a ship with three masts smashed flat, and two other ships were pierced through, as if by a lance, by fallen icebergs more than a hundred feet long, with sharp spiked ends, which met together across the decks.

A few minutes later, the boat regained the brig, and was drawn up to its accustomed place on deck.

"It is a lesson," said Shandon, aloud, "for rash people who will venture into narrow channels."

CHAPTER XIX.

ISLE BEECHEY.

On the 25th of June the *Forward* sighted Cape Dundas, the north-easterly point of Prince of Wales' Island. The

difficulty of navigation increased as the packs became more numerous. The distance that, in ordinary circumstances, the brig would have made in a day, took her from the 25th to the 30th of June.

Hatteras knew as well as Shandon how the coals stood : but relying on finding stores at Isle Beechey, he would not lose a moment for the sake of economy. The *distance* south, short as it was, had greatly delayed him ; and though he had taken the precaution to start in April, he was not a whit farther on now than preceding expeditions had been at a similar period.

On the 30th of June, Cape Walker came in sight, and soon afterwards Cape Bellot, so named from the brave young French officer who perished in the English expedition. Three cheers were given to his memory as the brig passed, pushing her way through the loose floes across Barrow's Straits.

Hatteras was so afraid of missing the island that he hardly quitted his post on the deck for an instant. All that skill and *sang froid*, and even nautical genius, could do, he did. Fortune certainly showed him no favour, for at this time of the year he ought to have found the straits nearly free from ice ; but at length, by neither sparing his steam, nor his men, nor himself, he gained his end.

On the 3rd of July the ice-master signalled land ahead to the north, and after consulting the chart Hatteras came to the conclusion that this must be Isle Beechey. Johnson's heart beat quicker as they

approached, for this was not his first visit, and memory was busy with the past. He had been quartermaster on board the *Phoenix*, the expedition in which Lieutenant Bellot had been engaged, and Hatteras looked to him for information as to the facilities for anchorage. The weather was magnificent, and the thermometer continued steadily at 57°.

"Well, Johnson, do you recognise the place?" said the captain, as they were getting rapidly near.

"Yes, sir, it is certainly the island; but we must bear a little more to the north, the coast is more accessible there."

"But what about the huts and the stores?"

"Oh, you cannot see those till you get on shore. They are behind those hillocks you see there."

"And you say you landed considerable stores there?"

"Ay! that we did, captain. It was here that the Admiralty sent me in 1853, under the command of Inglefield, with the *Phoenix* steamer and a transport loaded with provisions. We carried enough with us to revictual an entire expedition."

"But the commander of the *Fox* drew on them largely in 1855, did he not?" said Hatteras.

"Rest easy, captain, you'll see there is enough and to spare yet, and the cold has such a wonderful power of preserving food, that we shall find everything as good as the first day it was packed."

"I don't care about the provisions. I have plenty for several years. It is the fuel I am anxious about."

"Well, captain, we left more than one thousand tons of coals there, so you need not fear about that."

"We might land now, I think," said Hatteras, who had been closely watching the shore, glass in hand.

"You see yon point, sir," said Johnson. "When we have doubled that we are quite near our anchorage. Yes! it was from that very point we started on our way back to England with Lieutenant Cresswell and the twelve sick sailors belonging to the *Investigator*. Ah! well, we had to leave one brave lieutenant behind, though we brought back Lieutenant McClure safe. Poor young Bellot never saw his native land again. His is a sad story; but, captain, I think we may cast anchor now."

"Very well," said Hatteras, giving the order immediately.

The brig had just reached a little bay, sheltered by nature from the north, south, and east winds, and within a cable's length of the shore.

"Mr. Wall," said Hatteras, "get the boat ready, and six men to go with her to carry coals on board."

"Yes, sir," said Wall.

"I am going ashore in the pirogue with the Doctor and boatswain. Mr. Shandon, you will please to accompany us."

"At your service," replied Shandon.

A few minutes later all four landed on a low, rocky beach.

"You must be our guide, Johnson," said the captain.
 "Do you know the place again?"

"Perfectly, sir," was the reply; "but I see a monument there that is new to me."

"That!" exclaimed the Doctor; "I can give you the history of that. But let us go up to it, for I expect it will best explain itself."

They soon reached it, and the Doctor, taking off his cap reverently, said:

"This is a monument erected to Franklin and his companions."

And so it was. Lady Franklin sent a tablet of marble to Dr. Kane in 1855, and entrusted another to McClintock in 1858, to be set up in Isle Beechey. McClintock executed his commission religiously, and placed this tablet beside the funeral stone raised to the memory of Bellot by Sir John Barrow. It bore the following inscription:—

TO THE MEMORY OF
 FRANKLIN, CROZIER, FITZ-JAMES,
 AND ALL THEIR BRAVE COMRADES,

*Officers, and faithful companions, who suffered and perished
 for the cause of Science and the glory of their Country.*

*This Stone is erected near the place where they spent their
 last Arctic winter, and from whence they set out to triumph
 over difficulties or die. It betokens ~~the~~ hallowed memory in*

which they are held by admiring fellow-countrymen and friends, and the anguish, subdued by faith, of her who has lost in the leader of the expedition the most devoted and affectionate of husbands.

*It is thus that He led them to the heaven above where all
rest in peace.*

1855.

This stone on a lonely shore of these distant regions, spoke sorrowfully to the heart. All that remained of Franklin and his brave band, so full of life and hope, was this marble block. And yet in spite of such gloomy warning, the *Forward* was about to rush on in the very path of the *Erebus* and *Terror*.

Hatteras was the first to rouse himself from such dangerous contemplations. He climbed hastily up a little hill, from the top of which Johnson said the storehouses could be seen.

Shandon and the Doctor rejoined them immediately; but none of the party could discover anything but a far-stretching expanse, without a trace of human habitation.

"Well, that's strange!" said Johnson.

"What now? Where are the dépôts?" asked Hatteras, sharply.

"I don't know—I can't see," stammered Johnson.

"You have mistaken the road perhaps," suggested the Doctor, thoughtfully.

"Yet it seems to me," said Johnson, "that it was just here——"

"Well, be quick, pray, and tell us where to go," said the impatient captain.

"Let us go down again ; for I may be wrong. It is seven years ago now since I was here, and my memory may be at fault."

"Especially in a country where such monotonous uniformity prevails."

"And yet——" muttered Johnson.

Shandon made no remark.

After waiting a few minutes longer, Johnson stopped all of a sudden, and said :

"No, I am right, after all !"

"Well," replied Hatteras, looking about, "and where are they ?"

"Do you see how the ground seems to swell out there," said Johnson, "just where we are standing, and can you trace the shape of these big mounds in it ?"

"Well, and what's that to do with the question ?" inquired the Doctor.

"These are the graves of three of Franklin's sailors," was the reply. "I'm sure of it ; and a hundred paces off was the principal depôt. I am not mistaken now, and if the stores are not there, it must be owing to——"

He did not venture to say what he thought ; but a terrible suspicion shot through Hatteras, and made him rush impetuously forward. But where were the

stores on which he had so confidently reckoned ! This was the right place ; but destruction, and pillage, and ruin had been at work, and not a vestige remained of the vast supplies laid up for the relief of hard bestead navigators. And who had committed these depredations ? Was it the wolves and bears ? No, for they would only have destroyed the provisions ; but not so much as the tattered remnant of a tent was left, not a morsel of wood, nor a piece of iron ; and, worse still, for the *Forward* at any rate, not an atom of coal ! It was evident that frequent intercourse with European ships had taught the Esquimaux the value of these things, for they must have been coming back and forward ever since the *Fox* had touched at the island, constantly pillaging, till all trace of a storehouse had disappeared in the snow.

Hatteras was dumbfounded. The Doctor shook his head and gazed silently. Shandon said nothing ; but a close observer might have seen a malicious smile on his lips.

Just at this moment the men came with the boat to fetch the coal. They understood all at a glance. Shandon went up to the captain and said :

" Mr. Hatteras, I don't see the use of giving way to despair. Fortunately, we are at the entrance of Barrow's Strait, which will take us straight to Baffin's Bay."

" Mr. Shandon," replied Hatteras, " fortunately we are at the entrance to Wellington Channel, which will take us straight to the north ! "

" And how are we to work the ship, sir ? "

"By her sails. We have still fuel for two months, and that is more than enough for our winter's sojourn."

"You will allow me to say——" began Shandon.

"I will allow you to follow me on board, sir!" interrupted Hatteras; and, turning on his heel, he walked off to the boat, and shut himself in his cabin as soon as they reached the brig.

For two days the wind was contrary. The captain did not make his appearance on deck at all, and the Doctor took advantage of the forced delay to explore the island thoroughly. He gathered the few plants that he found growing here and there in sheltered spots: a few specimens of heath, and some common lichens, a sort of yellow ranunculus, a species of sorrel, and several pretty strong saxifrages; this was the whole extent of the flora.

The fauna of the island was not so limited. The Doctor saw large flocks of geese and cranes flying towards the north; partridges; eider-ducks, with blue-black plumage; chevaliers, a species of snipe; northern divers; ptarmigan, which turned out capital eating; dovebies, with black bodies, wings spotted with white, and beaks and claws as red as coral; and whole flights of screaming kittiwakes, besides other birds. He was also so fortunate as to catch several grey hares, which had not yet put on their winter mantle, and a blue fox that Duk ran down very cleverly. A few bears made their appearance, but scampered off in terror, evidently accustomed to dread the approach of men; and several seals came in sight, but they were quite as timorous as their enemies the bears. Invertebrate animals had only

one solitary representative, belonging to the order Diptera—a mosquito, which the Doctor had the gratification of catching after sundry bites. His conchological researches were not so successful. The bay abounded in a species of whelk, which were very palatable, and he also found a sort of mussel and a few bivalvular shells.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEATH OF BELLOT.

ON the 3rd and 4th of July the thermometer stood at 57° , and it never rose higher than this during the whole time of the expedition. But on Thursday, the 5th, the wind shifted to S.E., and became very violent, accompanied by whirling eddies of snow. The temperature fell the night before 23° . Hatteras, without caring about the ill-humour of the crew, gave orders to weigh anchor. For thirteen days, that is to say, since leaving Cape Dundas, the *Forward* had not made one degree farther north. This did not satisfy the money-loving Clifton party at all, and for the time being at least they were quite as willing as the captain to try and push their way through Wellington Channel.

This channel was first fully explored in 1851, by Captain Penny, on the whalers *Lady Franklin* and *Sophia*; and it was one of his officers, Lieutenant

Stewart, who succeeded in getting as far as Cape Beecher, in latitude $76^{\circ} 20''$, and made the discovery of an open sea. An open sea! This was the hope which inspired Hatteras.

"What Stewart found, I shall find too," he said to the Doctor; "and then we can sail easy enough to the Pole."

"But have you no misgivings about the crew?" asked the Doctor.

"My crew!" repeated Hatteras, bitterly; but he added presently, in a low voice, as if speaking to himself, "Poor fellows!"

The Doctor was amazed, for it was the first time he had betrayed the least kindly feeling. But he had hardly time to recover his surprise before the old hardness came back, and Hatteras exclaimed vehemently:

"No! they must and shall go with me!"

The *Forward* found no great difficulty in getting through the ice, for the ice-streams were pretty far apart; but still she made little progress, owing to contrary winds. It was not till the 10th that she passed at length the 75th parallel, to the great joy of Clifton.

They had now reached the very point where the *Advance* and the *Rescue*, two American vessels in Dr. Kane's expedition, had met with such terrible disasters. Shandon took care to rehearse the whole story of suffering and danger to the crew, with what dispiriting effect may be imagined.

Johnson and the Doctor, meantime, were also going over past scenes of which this locality had been the

theatre ; and tears came to the soft-hearted old sailor's eyes as he pointed to the coast, and exclaimed :

" Ah ! yes ; that's the fatal place ! "

" It was here that poor Bellot lost his life ? "

" Just on this part of the coast of North Devon. It was to be, I suppose ; for, if Captain Pullen had only come back a little sooner, it would never have happened. It was just his fate. "

" What do you mean, Johnson ? "

" Listen, sir, and you'll see on what a trifle life may hang. You know that Lieutenant Bellot made his first expedition in search of Franklin in 1850 ? "

" Yes, Johnson ; in the *Prince Albert*. "

" Well, sir, on his return to France, in 1853, he obtained permission to embark on board the *Phoenix*, where I served under Captain Inglefield. We came with the *Breadalbane*, a transport, to carry provisions. "

" These very provisions we have been unlucky enough to miss ? "

" The same, sir. We arrived at Isle Beechey in the beginning of August. On the 10th, Captain Inglefield left the *Phoenix* to rejoin Captain Pullen, who had been away from his ship, the *North Star*, for a month previously. He reckoned on his return to send on the despatches from the Admiralty to Sir Edward Belcher, who was then wintering in Wellington Channel. But our captain had scarcely left before Captain Pullen came back. Lieutenant Bellot, fearing that Captain Inglefield's absence might be prolonged, and knowing the urgency of the despatches, offered to carry them

himself. He gave the two ships into the charge of Captain Pullen, and left on the 12th of August with a sledge and an india-rubber canoe, taking with him Harvey, the quartermaster of the *North Star*, and three sailors, Madden, David Hook, and me. We supposed Sir Edward would be somewhere about Cape Beecher, at the north of the channel; so we got into the sledge and bent our course towards this coast. The first day, we camped for the night about three miles from Cape Innis, and next day we stopped on a large floe. But, in the middle of the night, which was as clear as day, Lieutenant Bellot discovered land about three miles off, and determined to proceed thither at once in the canoe. But, twice over, he was driven back by a violent breeze from the S.E. Harvey and Madden made a third attempt and succeeded. They managed to establish a communication between the sledge and the shore, and had already conveyed three different articles by means of ropes safely to land, when our floe began suddenly to move. M. Bellot shouted to his companions to let go the rope, and we drifted away rapidly from the coast. Hook and I were with him, and we lost sight of the others entirely. A gale set in from the S.E., and snow fell heavily, but we were in no great danger. We tried for a while to shelter ourselves under the covering of the sledge; but, finding that was no good, we set to work with our knives to cut blocks of ice, and build ourselves a house. Then M. Bellot sat down for about half-an-hour, and talked over our situation. I told him I was not afraid. 'If God protects us,' he said, 'not a hair of

our head will fall to the ground.' I asked him what o'clock it was, and he told me, about a quarter-past six. This was in the morning, on the 18th of August. He tied his books together, and said he would go out and see how we were drifting. He had not been away more than four minutes, when I went to look for him. I walked all round the floe, but I could not see a trace of him, till, in returning to our shelter, I saw his stick on the opposite side of a crevasse about five fathoms wide, where the ice was completely broken up. I called out his name, but there was no answer. The wind was very violent, and I sought for him again all round the floe; but the brave young fellow was nowhere to be seen!"

"And what had befallen him, do you suppose?" asked the Doctor.

"I suppose the wind caught him just as he came out of the hut, and he was blown right down into the crevasse; and, as his paletot was buttoned up, he could not swim to the surface. Oh, Mr. Clawbonny, I can't tell you how I felt! It was the greatest sorrow I ever knew. I would not believe he was gone. Brave young fellow! he was beloved by every one on board, for he was so obliging and so full of manly courage. All England lamented him; and even the rude Esquimaux shed tears when they learnt his sad fate from Captain Inglefield, on his return to Pound Bay. Poor Bellot!"

"But what did you and your companion do, Johnson?" said Dr. Clawbonny, much moved by the touching recital. "How did you get to land?"

"Oh ! that was nothing, sir. We stayed on the floe twenty-four hours longer, without food or fire ; but we came across an ice-field at last that had run aground on a shoal, and we jumped on this ; and, by the help of an oar which still remained to us, we got on to a floe that was strong enough to carry us, and as navigable as a raft. That's how we got to land ; but all alone—without our gallant officer !"

By the time Johnson had ended his narrative, the *Forward* had left the coast behind, out of sight. On the 14th of July she doubled Point Osborn, and next day anchored in Baring Bay, at the extreme end of the Channel.

It was in this same bay that Sir Edward Belcher wintered in 1853-1854. There is a narrow channel at the head of it which runs into Queen's Channel.

The ice-packs were now very numerous, and navigation became exceedingly difficult. Hatteras endeavoured vainly to get past Isle Hamilton, but the wind was contrary. Then he tried to glide the brig in between Isle Hamilton and Isle Cornwallis, and again he failed, after wasting five precious days in the attempt. The temperature was constantly getting lower, and on the 19th of July fell to 26° . It rose somewhat the next day ; but this premonition of an Arctic winter's approach was not lost on Hatteras. The wind was inclined to keep steadily in the west, dead against the ship, while he was all impatience to reach the latitude where Stewart had discovered the open sea. On the 19th he determined to go up the channel, come what might. By working

the screw, the brig could fight her way against the rough gales of wind and driving snow ; but, above all things, the scanty store of fuel must be husbanded. On the other hand, the channel was too wide to permit of "tracking," as it is called in Arctic language—that is, towing with ropes along a margin of ice. Hatteras, therefore, had recourse to a method sometimes adopted by whalers in similar circumstances. Without giving a moment's consideration to the fatigue of his crew, he ordered the boats to be lowered to the level of the water, so as just to touch the surface, though without detaching them from the sides of the ship, to which they were then firmly fastened fore and aft. In these boats the men had to seat themselves in turn, with oars in hand, and row vigorously to drag the vessel forward against the wind.

It was slow work, and one can imagine the labour it was for the crew. But at length, after four days' sailing in this fashion, the *Forward* emerged into Queen's Channel, and reached Baring's Island.

The wind was still adverse ; but the crew could do no more. Their health was too much shaken, and the Doctor feared he could detect in several the first indications of scurvy. He lost no time in combating the terrible malady, for he had lime juice and lime pastilles, in abundance.

Hatteras knew well enough he could no longer count on his men. Mildness and persuasion were of no avail now : he resolved to conquer by severity, and even to show himself pitiless on occasion. Richard

Shandon he especially mistrusted, and he had his doubts about James Wall too. Dr. Clawbonny, Johnson, Bell, and Simpson, he knew were devoted to him, body and soul. Pen, Gripper, Clifton, and Warren, he was quite aware were only waiting their time to break out in open mutiny, and drag the brig back to England; and the others were ready to take either side at any moment.

Meanwhile, what was to be done? The crew were not only badly disposed, but so exhausted that they could not possibly continue such fatiguing efforts, and for twenty-four hours they had remained absolutely stationary in sight of Isle Baring. And yet the temperature was always getting lower, for it was far on now in July. On the 24th the thermometer fell to 22° . Young ice formed during the night of considerable thickness, and should snow come down, it would soon be firm enough to bear a man's weight. There was a grey, dirty look about the sea already which betokened the commencement of the process of crystallisation.

There was no mistaking these alarming symptoms. Should the leads close, Hatteras would be obliged to winter here without having gained his object, or even caught a glimpse of the open basin which was so close at hand, if the reports of his predecessors had been correct. He determined to push forward at all risks, and as he could not use the oars in the present worn-out state of his men, nor the sails, for the wind was contrary, he gave orders to kindle the furnaces.

CHAPTER XXI.

BEGINNINGS OF MUTINY.

THIS unexpected command occasioned great surprise on board the *Forward*, and loud exclamations were heard on all sides. Shandon looked fixedly at Wall, and the engineers stood perfectly stupefied.

"Did you hear me?" shouted the captain in an angry tone.

Brunton moved towards the hatchway, but stopped short again as a voice called out :

"Don't go, Brunton !"

"Who spoke?" exclaimed Hatteras.

"It was I that spoke," said Pen, boldly, going up to the captain.

"And you said——"

"I said and I say," interrupted Pen with an oath, "that we have had enough of this work? that we are not going farther ; that we neither intend to be killed with hard work, nor frozen to death in the winter ; and that the furnaces shall not be lighted !"

"Mr. Shandon," replied Hatteras, coolly, "lay that man in irons."

"But, captain," objected Shandon, "what the man has said is——"

"Repeat what this man has said, and I'll have you locked in your cabin and guarded. Seize that man ! Does no one hear me?"

Johnson, Bell, and Simpson went forward ; but the infuriated Pen was beside himself. He caught up a handspike, and brandishing it above his head, cried out :

“Touch me who dare !”

Hatteras went right up to him with a loaded revolver, which he aimed at his head, and said quietly :

“Lift your finger, and I blow your brains out.”

A murmur of disapprobation was heard ; but it died away immediately when Hatteras said :

“Silence among you, or that is a dead man.”

Pen made no further attempt at resistance, but allowed Johnson and Bell to disarm him and lead him away to the hold.

“Go, Brunton !” said Hatteras.

The engineer obeyed without further parley, and the captain went up to the poop, followed by the Doctor.

As soon as the steam had acquired sufficient pressure, the anchors were lifted, and the *Forward* stood off for Point Beecher, and went towards the east, cutting through the newly-formed ice with her sharp prow.

She had to wend her way through narrow channels between numerous small islands. The ice-streams were constantly threatening to unite, hummocks had formed here and there already, and it was easy to see that the first frost that set in would consolidate the whole into one impenetrable mass.

Yet every now and then the sun would reappear and

chase away the whirling snow, the thermometer would rise several degrees, difficulties would vanish as if by enchantment, and a stretch of clear, open water would greet the eye.

On Thursday, the 26th of July, the brig sailed close past Isle Dundas, still keeping her prow steadily towards the north; but almost directly afterwards she came to an enormous bank of ice, eight to nine feet high, composed of small icebergs that had been detached from the coast. There was no getting past it except by making a deep bend out of the course. At last a lead was discovered; but still the *Forward* made slow progress, for the fog came on, and this is a serious obstacle to a sailing vessel among ice. So long as the pilot can see a mile ahead, he can easily steer his way through the packs; but often it is so thick that he cannot see a cable's length before him, and the difficulty was increased by the blinding snow.

The birds were still very numerous, and their cries were deafening; the seals lolling indolently on the drifting floes, betrayed little fear, though they stretched out their long necks and gazed with wondering eyes as the vessel passed by.

At length, after six days' wearisome navigation, Point Beecher appeared to the north. Hatteras betook himself to the mast-head, and remained there for hours; for the open sea discovered by Stewart in May, 1851, could not be far off, and yet no sign of it as yet could be discovered. He came down again after his long watch without saying a word.

"Do you believe in this open sea?" asked Shandon, speaking to James Wall.

"I begin to have my doubts," was the reply.

"Was not I right, after all, in treating this pretended discovery as a mere chimera? And yet no one would listen to me, and even you, Wall, took the other side of the question."

"They will listen to you now, Shandon."

"Yes, when it is too late," he replied, and retired to his cabin, to which he had confined himself almost entirely since his discussion with the captain.

According to Penny, the sea ought to be quite clear now, for they had reached Point Barrow after taking ten days to go thirty miles. What was Hatteras to think? Was Penny's statement altogether apocryphal, or had winter already set in?

On the 15th of August the snow-crowned head of Mount Percy appeared through the fog, and next day the sun set for the first time after incessant day for so long.

However, the darkness which followed was by no means complete; though the sun had set, the refraction of his rays still gave sufficient light.

On the 19th of August, Cape Franklin was sighted to the east, and Cape Lady Franklin to the west; the one doubtless was the extreme point reached by the bold navigator, and the other was so called by his grateful countrymen, in honour of his devoted wife, as a touching symbol of the loving bond that united them so closely.

The Doctor, following Johnson's advice, was trying to brace himself to the cold as much as possible, by remaining nearly always on deck, in spite of wind and snow. His health was unimpaired, though he had grown a little thinner. He was quite prepared for fresh dangers, and gaily welcomed each precursor of winter.

"Look at that flock of birds migrating south!" he called out one day to Johnson. "How swift they fly, shrieking their last adieux as they go!"

"Yes, Mr. Clawbonny, something tells them it is time to go, and off they start."

"More than one among us, Johnson, I wager, would like to follow their example."

"Chicken-hearted fellows!" said Johnson. "Those poor flying things have not their food all ready to hand like us, and of course they must seek it elsewhere. But sailors, with a good ship under their feet, ought to go to the world's end."

"You hope then that Hatteras will succeed in his projects?"

"He will succeed, I'm sure of it, Mr. Clawbonny."

"I agree with you, Johnson, and even if only one faithful friend remained to him——"

"We should make two."

"You are right, Johnson," said the Doctor, grasping the brave fellow's hand.

Prince Albert's Land, which the *Forward* was now alongside, is also called Grinnel's Land, and though Hatteras so hated the Yankees that he would never

have given it that name, most people know it by the American designation. Both names were bestowed on it at the same time, though by different people—Penny in honour of Prince Albert, and Lieutenant de Haven, the commander of the *Rescue*, in honour of Grinnel, the American merchant, at whose expense the expedition had been sent out.

After a succession of unheard-of difficulties, the *Forward* sighted Mount Britannia, though it was scarcely visible through the fog, and next day dropped anchor in Northumberland Bay, and found herself completely closed in on all sides.

9/11/1847

CHAPTER XXII.

ASSAULT OF THE ICEBERGS.

AFTER seeing that the vessel was properly moored, Hatteras withdrew to his cabin and studied his chart attentively. He found he was in latitude $76^{\circ} 57'$, and longitude $92^{\circ} 20'$; in other words, almost close to the 77th parallel. This was where Sir Edward Belcher passed his first winter on the *Pioneer* and the *Assistance*, and from this point he organised his exploring parties, and succeeded in reaching the 78th degree. Beyond this he found that the coast inclined to the S.E. to-

wards Jones' Sound, which opens into Baffin's Bay, but on the N.W. he could discern nothing as far as the eye could see but clear, open water.

Hatteras gazed long and earnestly at the blank white space on the map which represented the unexplored regions round the Pole, and he said to himself :

"After all these testimonies from Stewart, Penny, Belcher, I cannot doubt. The open sea must be there. These bold, hardy men have seen it with their own eyes. Can it be that it was during some exceptional winter, and that now——? but no, that cannot be the case, for several years elapsed between the discoveries. The basin exists and I will find it, and see it for myself !"

He went again on the bridge, but the ship was wrapped in dense fog, and the mast-head was hardly visible from deck ; yet Hatteras made the ice-master come down, and went himself to take his place in the "crow's-nest." He was anxious to watch for the least rift in the fog to examine the north-west horizon.

Shandon could not lose the chance to say to his friend :

"Well, Wall, where is this open sea ?"

"You were right, Shandon, and we have not more than six weeks' coal left now."

"Oh ! the Doctor will find some scientific method of warming ourselves without fire. I have heard people say that ice can be made with fire, so perhaps he can make us fire with ice."

Next morning the fog cleared off for a few minutes, and Hatteras could be seen eagerly scanning the horizon from his elevated position ; but he came down without saying a word, and gave orders to sail forthwith. It was easy to tell that his last hope had failed him.

The *Forward* weighed anchor, and once more resumed her uncertain course towards the north. It was evident there would be a general frost before long, for the sea was covered with whitish patches, looking like spots of oil, and whenever the wind fell the whole surface was speedily covered with a sheet of ice, which broke up, however, and disappeared as soon as the breeze returned. Towards night the thermometer fell to 17° .

Often the leads seemed quite closed ; but an unexpected movement of the ice-streams would open the way in some new direction, and the brave vessel would dash in at once and follow it up boldly ; but the cold was so intense that during these forced stoppages, the steam that escaped from the valves would condense immediately and fall in snow on the deck. Sometimes there was another cause of delay. The loose ice would get entangled among the machinery, and adhere so firmly that the engine was powerless. The sailors had to bring levers and handspikes, and break it away, before the screw could work.

Thirteen days passed thus, during which the *Forward* was dragging wearily through Penny's Straits. The crew grumbled, but obeyed, for they saw that going back was impossible. To go forth would be attended

with less peril now than to return south : it was time to think of winter quarters.

The men had long talks among themselves about their present situation, and even ventured to discuss it with Shandon, knowing quite well he was on their side.

"You say then, Mr. Shandon," said Gripper, "that we cannot go back?"

"It is too late now," replied Shandon.

"I suppose, then," said another sailor, "all we can do is to make ourselves comfortable for the winter?"

"It is our only resource. I was not believed when I——"

"Next time you will be," said Pen, who had returned to his duty.

"As I shall not be master on board——" replied Shandon.

"Who knows?" said Pen. "John Hatteras is at liberty to go as far north as he thinks proper, but we are not obliged to follow him."

"He need only remember his first voyage to Baffin's Bay, and what came of it," replied Gripper.

"Ay! and his voyage in the *Farewell*," said Clifton, "when he lost his ship in the Spitzberg seas!"

"And came home alone," added Gripper.

"Alone with his dog," replied Clifton.

"We have no desire to sacrifice ourselves for such a man's good pleasure," put in Pen.

"No, nor to lose our hard-earned prize-money," rejoined the avaricious Clifton. "When we have passed the 78th parallel," he went on, "and we are not far off now, that will be just £375 for each of us!"

"But shan't we forfeit it," asked Gripper, "if we return without the captain?"

"No," answered Clifton; "if it is proved that our return was absolutely necessary."

"But the captain might——"

"Rest easy, Gripper," replied Pen. "We shall have a captain, and a good one, that Mr. Shandon knows. When a commander goes mad, he is displaced, and the power given to another. Isn't it so, Mr. Shandon?"

"My friends," replied Shandon, evasively, "you will always find in me a devoted heart to you; but let us wait the course of events."

It was evident the storm was gathering over the head of Hatteras. But he went boldly on, firm and unshaken as ever, full of energy and confidence. He saw that he would be forced to winter in these regions; but what of it? Had not Sir John Ross and McClure passed three winters in succession here? What they had done, others could do.

On the 31st of August the thermometer stood at 13°. The end of the navigable season had arrived.

Leaving Exmouth Isle on the right, the *Forward* passed Table Isle, into the middle of the Belcher Channel. There was scarcely an inch depth of water now under her keel; and, far as the eye could reach, nothing was to be seen but ice-fields.

Fortunately, it was possible to get a few minutes farther north yet, by breaking the young ice with enormous rollers and petards. The great thing to be dreaded in low temperatures is a calm atmosphere, as ice forms so rapidly in the absence of wind. Even contrary winds were joyfully welcomed, but they did not continue long ; a calm night came, and all was frozen.

The *Forward* could not winter in such a situation, however, exposed to winds and icebergs, and the currents of the channel ; and Hatteras sought to get beyond Point Albert, where there was a sheltered bay which would afford a safe refuge.

But, on the 8th of September, they came to a high, impassable wall of ice, which rose between them and the north. The temperature fell to 10° , and Hatteras was almost at his wits' end. He risked his ship a hundred times in impracticable leads, and displayed prodigies of skill in extricating her again. Thoughtless and imprudent, and even blind as he was, no one could deny that he was a good sailor—indeed, one of the very ablest.

The *Forward* was now in a really perilous situation. All was ice behind, and ice of such thickness, that the men could run on it securely and tow the brig along.

Since there was no getting round this wall, Hatteras determined to attack it with his blasting-cylinders. It took the whole of one day to make holes in the ice of sufficient depth, but he hoped all would be ready next morning for the explosion.

However, during the night the wind began to rage

furiously. The sea rose under the ice as if shaken by some submarine disturbance ; and the terrified voice of the pilot was heard shouting, " Look out at the stern ! Look out at the stern ! "

Hatteras looked in the direction indicated, and certainly it was an alarming sight that met his gaze. An enormous iceberg, towering aloft like a mountain, was coming rushing towards the ship with the speed of an avalanche.

" All hands on deck ! " sung out Hatteras.

The huge moving mass was not more than half a mile distant. On it came, tearing up the floes, crushing and overturning, and sweeping the packs along like grains of sand before the hurricane-blast.

" This is the worst danger that has ever threatened us yet," said Johnson to Dr. Clawbonny.

" Yes, it looks appalling enough, certainly," replied the Doctor.

" It is a regular assault, and we must prepare to meet it," said Johnson.

" I declare, one could fancy it was a whole pack of antediluvian monsters, such as might be supposed to live about the North Pole. They all seem pushing each other, and hurrying on to see which will arrive first."

" Aye, and some are armed with sharp lances, which I advise you to steer clear of, Dr. Clawbonny."

" It is going to be a regular siege," exclaimed the Doctor. " Come and let us be up on the ramparts."

Away he rushed to the stern, where all the crew

were stationed with poles, and iron bars, and hand-spikes, ready to repulse the formidable enemy.

The avalanche arrived, increasing in height as it came, owing to the accumulation of smaller icebergs it caught up in its train. Cannon-balls were fired, by the captain's orders, to break the threatening line of attack ; but it advanced nearer and nearer, and at length dashed against the brig with a tremendous crash, breaking part of the bulwarks.

"Keep to your posts, and look out for the bergs," shouted Hatteras.

There was much need, for they were boarding the vessel with irresistible force : already packs weighing several hundredweight had scaled the sides, while the smaller ones, which had been dashed up in the onset as high as the masts, fell down in a shower of pointed arrows, breaking the shrouds and cutting the rigging. Some of the sailors were sorely wounded by these bristling barbs as they stood, pole in hand, each doing his utmost to repulse their assailants, though almost overpowered by their numbers. Among others, Bolton had his left shoulder completely ripped up. The noise was terrible, and to add to it, Duk barked his loudest with rage. The darkness of night greatly increased the horrors of the situation, without hiding from view the angry packs glistening in their dazzling whiteness.

From time to time the voice of Hatteras was heard amid all the din and clamour of this strange, preternatural, impossible contest between men and icebergs.

The brig, yielding to the enormous pressure, leaned over on her larboard till her mainmast touched the ice-fields.

Hatteras understood the danger: it was a moment of terrible anxiety, for each instant the brig might turn over completely, or her masts be torn away.

Presently an enormous mass began to rise at the side of the ship, extending right along her hull. It seemed forced upward by some irresistible power, higher and higher, till at last it was on a level with the poop. Should it fall on the *Forward*, all was over. It turned and stood on end, higher than the tallest mast, and tottered on its base. A cry of terror escaped all lips, and there was a general rush to the other side.

Suddenly the vessel was entirely lifted up, and for a brief space seemed to float in the air. Then she came down again and fell back on the ice, to be caught up next minute in a tremendous roller, which made her timbers shiver, and swept her right over to the other side of the insurmountable barrier, on to an ice-field, into which she sank at once by her own weight, and regained her proper element.

"We are over the icebergs!" exclaimed Johnson.

"Praise God!" said Hatteras.

But though the ice barrier was surmounted, the brig was motionless, fast locked in on all sides, and though the keel was in the water, yet unable to stir.

It was soon evident, however, that if the brig was motionless, the field was not, and Johnson called out to the captain:

"We are driving, sir."

"Well, we must just drive!" replied Hatteras.

And, indeed, what else could they do? Resistance was impossible.

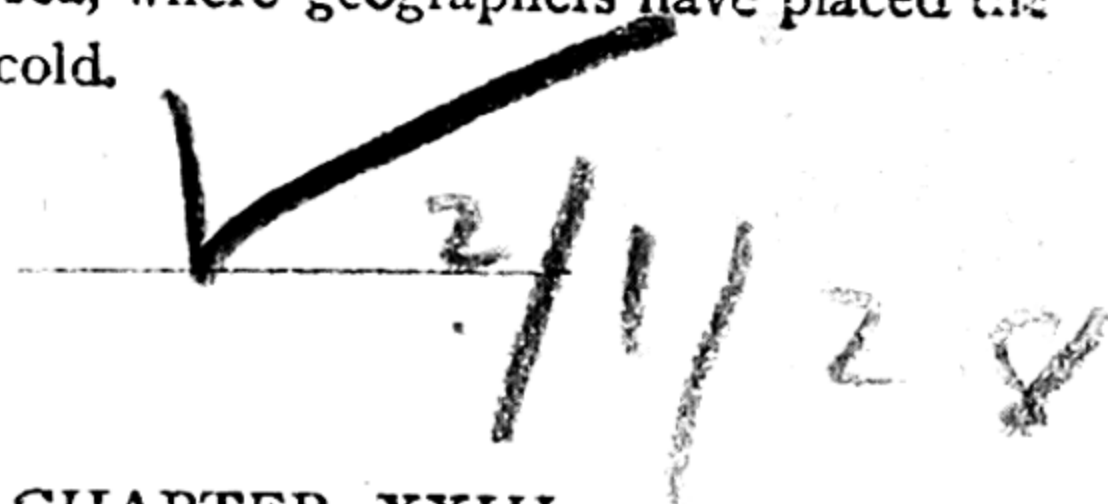
The day came, and it was quite clear that, owing to the action of some submarine current, the ice-field was moving rapidly north.

To provide for any possible catastrophe, for the brig might be dashed on some coast or crushed with the pressure of the ice, Hatteras had a great quantity of provisions brought up on deck, together with the tents and all the requisites for encamping, and the clothing and blankets of the crew. Following the example of McClure in similar circumstances, he also encircled the ship with a girdle of hammocks inflated with air, so as to ward off great seas, and the ice so accumulated on these that there was soon a high wall all around, and nothing of the ship was visible except the mainmast.

For seven days they sailed along in this strange fashion. On the 10th of September they caught a glimpse of Point Albert, the western extremity of New Cornwall. But they soon lost sight of it, as the ice-field began now to move in an easterly direction. Where could it go, and where would it stop? Who could say.

The crew waited with folded arms. At last, on the 15th of September, about three in the afternoon, the ice-field came into collision, no doubt, with another field, for it stopped suddenly short, and a violent shock shook the vessel to her centre. Hatteras, who had

taken his bearings during the day, consulted his chart. He found himself in the north, with no land in sight, in longitude $95^{\circ} 35'$, and latitude $78^{\circ} 15'$, in the heart of that unknown sea, where geographers have placed the point of greatest cold.



CHAPTER XXIII.

PREPARATIONS FOR WINTERING.

THE average temperature of the regions in which Hatteras found himself was 15° lower than any other part of the world. He was two hundred and fifty miles, by his reckoning, distant from the last point of known land—that is, from New Cornwall—and his ship was fast locked in ice, as if embedded in granite.

It was a terrible situation to be in, and he knew what a fearful winter he would have to go through, with a brig in such a position and a half-mutinous crew. But his courage rose to meet the danger, and he lost no time in commencing preparations for winter quarters, aided by the long experience of Johnson.

Far as the eye could see, there was nothing but ice; not a drop of water was visible in all the region. But the surface of the ice-fields was by no means smooth and uniform. Numerous icebergs raised their towering heads round the ship, forming such a belt,

that on three sides she was completely sheltered from the wind, and only the south-east could blow on her. If one could only suppose rocks instead of icebergs and verdure instead of snow, and the sea in its normal condition, the *Forward* would have been lying in a pretty sheltered bay. But what desolation reigned around! What a dismal prospect met the gaze!

The first business of the crew was to anchor the brig securely, for, motionless as she was, there might be a sudden break up of the ice-field, or some submarine current might affect it. The sails were not taken down, but closely furled, and before long the ice had encased them completely. Only the running rigging was removed. ✓

The pressure of the ice was so great, that it became necessary to cut it away all round the ship. The packs had accumulated on her sides, and weighed her down beyond her usual floating line. It was a tedious, difficult progress, occupying several days; but when at length the keel was released, the brig rose at once nine inches. Hatteras thought it advisable to take the opportunity of examining it thoroughly, while it was exposed. Thanks to the solidity of its construction, it was found to be quite uninjured, though the copper sheathing was almost entirely torn off.

The next business was to slope away the ice right along the hull, following the outline of the ship. By doing this, the ice-field united again under the keel and prevented all further pressure.

The Doctor lent a helping hand in all these opera-

tions, infecting the men with his own good-humour, and getting and giving information. He heartily approved of this adjustment of the ship, and thought it an excellent precaution.

"There is no other way of resisting the pressure, sir," said Johnson; "now we can build a wall of snow all round as high as the gunwale, and make it ten feet thick, if we like, for we have no lack of material."

"Capital!" said Dr. Clawbonny; "for snow is a non-conductor of caloric. It reflects instead of absorbs, and will prevent the internal heat from escaping."

"Yes, sir, and we not only fortify ourselves against the cold, but against four-footed enemies, should they take a fancy to pay us a visit. We'll make a famous job of it, and so you'll say when our work is finished."

"There will be two flights of steps outside the ship—one fore and one aft. As soon as the steps are cut, we shall pour water over them, and this will make them as hard as a rock, and we shall have stairs fit for a king."

Before long the whole vessel had disappeared beneath a thick coating of ice. A roof made of tarred canvas was spread over the deck the entire length of the ship and hanging down the sides. This was covered with snow, to prevent any external cold from penetrating. The deck was thus converted into a promenade, also covered with snow two and a half feet thick, well

beaten and trodden down to make it as hard as possible. Over this a layer of sand was sprinkled, which became speedily incrustéd, and gave the deck the appearance of a macadamised road.

“I shall soon fancy myself in Hyde Park,” said the Doctor; “or in the hanging-gardens of Babylon.”

At a convenient distance from the ship a fire-hole was made; that is to say, a well was dug in the ice, to provide a constant supply of water, a very necessary measure both for the frequent baths ordered the crew and in case of fire breaking out on board. This well was dug as deep as possible, as the water is not so cold as near the surface.

The interior of the vessel was arranged with a view to ward off the double danger of the Arctic regions—cold and damp. The first brings the second—a foe still more to be dreaded.

The *Forward* being constructed especially for the expedition, was admirably adapted for the purpose. The forecastle was wisely planned, and war had been successfully waged in the corners where damp first crept in. It would have been better if the men's room had been circular, but still with a good fire in the stove, it was very comfortable. The walls were hung with deers' skins, instead of anything woollen, as wool catches every vapour, and by their condensation, impregnates the atmosphere with humidity.

The partitions were taken down in the poop, and the officers had one common room larger and more airy than the forecastle, and also heated by a stove. Both it

and the men's room had a sort of ante-chamber, which cut off all direct communication with the exterior. This prevented the heat from escaping, and made a gradual passage from one temperature to another. All wet clothes were put off in these vestibules, and snow scraped from the boots.

A proper provision was made for the admission of air into the stoves, and the fires were carefully regulated. The temperature was kept up at 50°, and the smallest possible amount of coal used, as Hatteras found, on inspecting the bunkers, that, with the severest, most rigid economy, he had only enough for two months longer.

A drying-place was contrived for such clothing as had to be frequently washed, for nothing could be dried in the open air.

The delicate parts of the engine were carefully removed, and the engine-room hermetically closed.

The regulation of the ship life was a matter of serious consideration to Hatteras. At six the men rose, and three times a week their hammocks were carried out into the fresh air. Every morning the planks of the two living rooms were rubbed with hot sand. Boiling tea was served up at each meal, and as much variety as was practicable introduced in the daily bill of fare. The dietary scale included bread, flour, suet, and raisins for puddings ; sugar, cocoa, rice, lemon-juice, preserved meat, salt pork and beef, pickled cabbage, and mixed pickles. The kitchen was outside the living rooms ; it would have been an addition to the

heat to have placed it inside, but the cooking of food is a constant source of evaporation and moisture, so that it would have been a doubtful benefit.

Health is greatly dependent on food, and in high latitudes as much as possible of animal substances require to be consumed.

"We must take example by the Esquimaux," said the Doctor; "they have been taught by nature, and are apt scholars. Arabs and Africans can live on a few dates and a handful of rice, but here it is important to eat much. An Esquimaux absorbs daily from ten to fifteen pounds of oil. If his fare would not meet your taste, you must replace it by substances which abound in oil and sugar; in a word, you must have carbon and make carbon. It is all well enough to put coals in the stove, but we must not forget we have a stove inside us which needs always replenishing."

The most scrupulous cleanliness was also rigidly enforced. Each man was obliged to take a bath of the icy water every other day as a matter of health, and also as an excellent means of preserving natural heat. The Doctor himself set the example; it was rather a trying operation at first, but in the end he found it positively agreeable.

The men had to be on their guard not to get frost-bitten when they were out of doors shooting, or working or exploring. In the event of this happening, however, the frozen part was briskly rubbed with snow till circulation was restored. The clothing of the men was also carefully attended to; they were all wrapped

in flannel, and wore deerskin capes and sealskin trousers.

The making of these several arrangements occupied three weeks, and the first of October arrived without any particular occurrence to record.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN OLD FOX OF THE JAMES ROSS EXPEDITION.

THE thermometer fell daily lower. There was little or no wind, and the weather was tolerably fine. Hatteras took advantage of the clear atmosphere to go out and reconnoitre. He climbed the highest iceberg he could find, but, as far as he could see, and aided by the glass, nothing was visible but mountains and plains of ice. All was dreary chaos, and he went back on board to try and reckon the probable length of his captivity.

The hunting party, including the Doctor, James Wall, Simpson, Johnson, and Bell, kept the ship in fresh meat. All the birds had disappeared except the ptarmigans, but these were in such abundance and so easily shot that there was no fear of the supply being exhausted.

Hares, foxes, wolves, ermines, and bears were also to be found, but they were so ferocious that it was not

easy to get near them; and, besides, when they had put on their winter coats it was hard to distinguish them from the snow, as they then possess its spotless whiteness, the fur becoming completely changed as winter draws on.

Seals of every variety were also frequently met with. It was a great object to kill these, not only for their skins, but their fat, which is an excellent combustible. Their liver is also good food, if nothing better can be had. Sometimes they could be counted by hundreds, and two or three miles away from the ship the ice was bored all over with their breathing holes; yet they were very difficult to secure, and many were wounded that succeeded afterwards in making their escape below the ice.

However, on the 19th, Simpson managed to get hold of one not far from the ship. He had taken the precaution to stop up its hole, so that it was at the mercy of the hunters. After a long struggle the animal was dispatched; it measured nine feet, and was a magnificent specimen. The doctor, wishing to preserve the head for his museum of natural history and the skin for future needs, prepared both, by a cheap and easy method. He plunged the body in the fire-hole, and allowed the myriad of shrimps and prawns to eat away the flesh. In half a day the operation was complete, and no tanner in Liverpool could have done it better.

As soon as the sun had passed the autumnal equinox, the Arctic winter may be said to begin. From the 23rd of September the sun begins to descend

below the horizon, and on the 25th of October disappears altogether, not to return till the month of February.

We must not imagine, however, that the darkness is total during the sun's long absence. The moon does her best to replace him, and the stars shine their brightest. The planets are peculiarly resplendent, and the *Aurora Borealis* is a frequent phenomenon, so that there is a sort of twilight for several hours every day, except when fog and snow wrap the whole region in gloomy night.

Meantime, however, the weather was favourable. No one had any reason to complain of it, except the ptarmigans and the hares, and the hunters positively allowed them no rest. They also set fox-traps, but the wary animals would not allow themselves to be caught. They often even scratched up the snow under the trap and devoured the bait, and came off scot free.

On the 25th of October a hurricane of extreme violence broke loose; thick snow filled the air, and made pitch darkness about the *Forward*. For some hours great anxiety was felt on board about Bell and Simpson, who were out hunting. They did not reach the ship till next day, after being buried in snow five feet thick for twelve hours. They had wrapped themselves in their deerskins and lain down, letting the hurricane sweep over their heads till they were almost frozen, and could hardly get back to their quarters. The Doctor had great difficulty in restoring the circulation.

The storm raged for eight days without ceasing ; no one stirred out.

During this compulsory leisure each man lived apart, as it were, some sleeping, others smoking, and certain individuals talking together in a low voice, but breaking off the conversation if Johnson or the Doctor came near ; there was no bond of union among them. They never assembled together for anything but evening prayers, and on the Sundays for divine service.

Clifton was perfectly aware of the fact, that now that the 78th parallel was passed, his share of the prize-money had risen to £375. This was quite enough to satisfy his ambition. The others thought so too, and contented themselves now with indulging in day-dreams of enjoying the fortune won at such a price.

Hatteras remained almost invisible ; he neither took part in hunting nor walking ; he showed no interest in any of the meteorological phenomena which so excited the wondering admiration of the Doctor. He lived for one single idea ; three words will tell it—the North Pole. He was only thinking of the time when the *Forward* would be released from her imprisonment, and able to resume her adventurous voyage.

The Doctor employed himself in arranging his notes, of which this narrative is the reproduction. He was never idle, and his even temper never failed him ; but for all that he was glad enough when the storm was over, and he could resume hunting as usual.

On the 3rd of November he set out with Johnson and Bell about six in the morning. The ice-fields were

smooth, and the snow, which lay so thick on them, was firm and hard beneath their tread. The weather was cold and dry ; the moon shone with incomparable brilliancy, irradiating every object with wondrous lustre.

The Doctor had brought his friend Duk with him ; he was much more serviceable in hunting than the Greenland dogs, who seem to possess none of the sacred fire of the race inhabiting temperate zones. But, in spite of all his cleverness in scenting game and running it down, the hunters had not found so much as a hare after two hours' walking.

"I suppose all the game has fled south," said the Doctor, stopping at the foot of a hummock.

"It certainly looks like it," rejoined Bell.

"I don't think that's it," said Johnson ; "hares, and foxes, and bears are made for this climate. In my opinion it is the hurricane that has caused their disappearance, but the south winds will soon bring them back. If you were speaking of reindeer or muskdeer, it would be quite a different thing."

"And yet on Melville Island there are troops of those very animals," said the Doctor. "Certainly it lies a little further south, but when Parry wintered there he found them in abundance always."

"We are not quite so well off," said Bell ; "yet if we could only lay in a store of bear's flesh, we should not have much to complain of."

"Bell talks of bear's flesh," said Johnson, "but we want his fat far more just now than even his flesh or fur."

"You are right, Johnson ; you are always thinking about the stores," replied Bell.

"No wonder," returned Johnson, "when the bunkers will be empty in three weeks, even with the utmost economy."

"Yes, that's our greatest danger, for this is only the beginning of November, and February is to come yet, the coldest month in the year in this zone. Well, if we can't get bear's grease, we can always get seal's fat, at any rate."

"Not for long, Mr. Clawbonny," replied Johnson ; "these animals will soon cease to show themselves above the ice, either owing to fear or to the increasing cold."

"Then, after all," said the Doctor, "we shall have to fall back on the bear, and certainly he is the most useful of all the Arctic animals, for we can get food and clothing, and light and fire out of him. Listen, Duk," he continued, patting the dog, "we want a bear, old boy ! Go and fetch him ; there's a good old fellow !"

Duk, who had been scenting along the ice all the time, darted off like an arrow, barking vociferously. The hunters followed, but, though they could hear him still distinctly, they had to go a full mile before they came up to him.

They found him standing on a little hill, on the top of which some enormous creature was moving about.

"We've got our wish for the asking," said the Doctor, loading his gun.

"Aye, it is a bear, and no mistake, and a jolly big one, too," said Bell, imitating the Doctor's example.

"I don't know, it is a strange sort of bear," added Johnson, preparing to fire after his companions.

Duk was barking furiously. Bell advanced within twenty feet and fired; but the ball took no effect.

Johnson's turn came last, but his ball was powerless like the others.

"I see how it is!" exclaimed the Doctor; it is that confounded refraction again, one never gets used to it. Why, that bear is more than a thousand paces off."

"Let us go nearer then," replied Bell.

Away rushed all three towards the animal, who did not appear the least disturbed by their shots.

As soon as they were at the right distance they fired again, and the bear gave one tremendous spring and fell at the foot of the hill mortally wounded, there was no doubt.

Duk rushed upon him tooth and nail, holding him fast till the hunters came up.

"Well, it hasn't been much trouble to kill that bear, anyhow," said the Doctor.

"Three shots and he is done for," exclaimed Bell, contemptuously.

"It is very strange!" said Johnson.

"Unless we have chanced to come just at the very

moment he was dying of old age," suggested the Doctor, laughing.

"My word, it is little matter whether he is young or old. It is a lucky prize for us."

But what was their blank amazement on reaching their victim to find that it was a white fox instead of a bear!

"Well, I declare," said Bell, "if that's not too bad!"

"Yes, I think so," replied the Doctor. "To kill a bear, and then pick up a fox."

Johnson stood stupefied, not knowing what to say.

At last the Doctor burst out laughing again, and said:

"It is just the refraction, that everlasting refraction!"

"What do you mean, Mr. Clawbonny?" asked the carpenter. *(Bell)*

"Why, that we were deceived in the size as well as in the distance. Refraction made us fancy we saw a bear when it was only a fox. It is a mistake that has happened more than once to hunters in the Arctic regions."

"Well, we'll eat him anyhow, whether it is bear or fox. Let us carry him off."

But just as Johnson was about to throw him over his shoulders, he stopped short and said:

"Here's something stranger still!"

"What's that?" asked the Doctor.

"Look here, Mr. Clawbonny. The beast has a collar round his neck."

"A collar!" exclaimed the Doctor, bending down to examine the animal.

Sure enough there was a brass collar half worn away round his neck, peeping through his white fur. The Doctor fancied he could perceive an inscription on it, and pulled it off to make a closer inspection.

"What does it say?" asked Johnson.

"It says that this fox is at least twelve years old, a fox caught by James Ross in 1848."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Bell.

"There is not the least doubt of it. I am only sorry we killed the poor beast. While James Ross was wintering here, he snared a great quantity of white foxes, and had brass collars riveted on their necks, with the name and whereabouts of his two ships, the *Enterprise* and *Investigator*, inscribed on it, and also where the provision depôts were to be found. These animals roam great distances in quest of food, and Ross's idea was that some of them might fall into the hands of Franklin's party. And now, instead of that, we have shot him with our balls, when he might have saved the lives of two ships' crews."

"We won't eat him, at any rate," said Johnson; "and besides, he is twelve years old. We'll keep his skin though, as a memento of this curious adventure."

Throwing the dead fox across his shoulder, and followed by his two companions, Johnson began to retrace his steps towards the vessel, guided by the stars. Their expedition had not been altogether unsuccessful, for they

managed during the homeward route to bring down several brace of ptarmigan.

Just about an hour before they reached the ship, a phenomenon occurred, which filled the Doctor with amazement.

It was a regular shower of shooting-stars. They fell in myriads, completely eclipsing the light of the moon. This grand meteoric display lasted several hours. A similar shower was observed in Greenland by the Moravian Brethren in 1799. The Doctor sat up all night to gaze at this wonderful phenomenon, which continued till seven o'clock next morning.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LAST BIT OF COAL.

THE bears appeared absolutely impregnable; not one was taken. Indeed, nothing was killed except a few seals, and then the wind changed and the snowfalls became so violent that it was impossible to leave the ship.

On the 15th of November the thermometer fell to 24° below zero. This was the lowest temperature they had hitherto experienced, yet with a calm atmosphere the cold would have been bearable, but the stormy

wind that blew seemed to fill the air with sharp lancets.

Even had it been possible to venture out, the least exercise would soon have made a man pant for breath. Not a fourth part of the usual work could be done by the crew, and woe to the hapless individual who was incautious enough to touch anything made of iron. He felt as if he had been suddenly burnt, and the skin was torn off his hand, and remained sticking to the article he had so imprudently grasped.

The only relief to the close confinement was a daily walk of two hours on the covered-in deck, and the permission to smoke, which was not allowed below.

The stoves had to be carefully attended to, for if the fires got the least low, the walls became covered with ice, and not only the walls, but every peg, and nail, and inch of metal.

The instantaneousness of this phenomenon astonished the Doctor. The breath of the men seemed to condense in a second, and leap, as it were, from fluid to solid, falling in snow all round them. Only a few feet away from the fire the cold was felt in all its intensity, and it was little wonder that the poor shivering fellows huddled round the stove in a close group, scarcely ever changing their position.

Yet the Doctor counselled them wisely to try and get inured to the temperature by gradually exposing themselves to its influence. But his advice was in vain, though he practised what he preached. The men

were nearly all too lazy or too benumbed to leave their post, and preferred sleeping away their time in the warm unwholesome atmosphere.

As for Hatteras, he seemed not to feel the change in the temperature in the least. He walked about as usual in perfect silence, and would be absent from the ship for hours, and return, to the astonishment of his crew, without a sign of cold on his face. What was the secret of this? Was he so wrapped in one idea that he was actually not susceptible of outward impressions?

"He is a strange man!" said the Doctor to Johnson. "He amazes even me; he has a blazing fire inside him!"

"It is a positive fact," replied Johnson; "that he goes about in the open air with not a stitch more clothing than he wore in the month of June!"

"Oh! as far as clothes are concerned, that is nothing; what's the good of wrapping up a man who has got no heat in himself? You may as well try and warm ice by putting it in a blanket. Hatteras does not need that; he is so constituted that really I should not be astonished to see things catch alight that come near him, as if they had touched glowing coal!"

Almost every night there was a display of the *Aurora Borealis*. From four o'clock to eight, a faint colour appeared in the northern horizon, which gradually assumed the form of an arc of a pale yellow tinge, the

extremities of which touched the ice. By degrees, the brilliant zone rose higher in the sky, and became streaked with dark bands, shooting out dazzling streamers of light, which broadened as they proceeded upwards. On reaching the zenith, the *Aurora* often seemed composed of several arcs, flooded with green, red, and yellow rays. These all converged to one point, and formed a meteor of truly celestial radiance. After a time the light grew fainter, and the colours diminished in intensity, till by slow, imperceptible degrees the marvellous phenomenon disappeared altogether.

The enchanting beauty of the *Aurora Borealis* can only be appreciated by those who have seen it near the Pole. In our temperate regions we have no idea of its grandeur.

Parasalenæ, or mock moons, were also visible while the moon shone, and seemed to heighten her lustre. Sometimes she would appear encircled with luminous halos.

On the 26th of November there was a high tide, and the water dashed violently up from the fire-hole. The thick covering of ice, measuring now ten feet, was shaken by the sea beneath, and ominous crackings told of the submarine commotion. Happily the brig remained firm, though her chains rattled and threatened to snap.

The weather became still colder during the succeeding days, and thick fog covered the sky.

The crew were chiefly occupied in preparing the fat and oil obtained from the seals. It had all frozen

into a solid block, which had to be chopped with a hatchet, and then pounded, for it was hard as marble.

On the 28th the thermometer fell to 32° below zero. There was only coal enough left to last ten days longer.

Hatteras dispensed now with the fire in the poop, and shared the common room of the men with Shandon and the Doctor. This brought him into more direct contact with his crew, who bestowed on him sullen, scowling glances. He heard their reproaches and recriminations, and even threats, without daring to punish. Indeed, he seemed deaf to all that was spoken, and sat in a corner away from the fire, with his arms folded, in perfect silence.

In spite of the Doctor's advice, Pen and his friends refused to take the least exercise. They spent whole days crouching over the stove, or in their hammocks rolled up in the blankets, and the consequence was that their health gave way, and scurvy, that terrible disease, made its appearance on board.

The Doctor had been dealing out lemon-juice and lime pastilles every morning for a considerable time, but these usually efficacious remedies had no apparent effect. The malady ran its course, and soon assumed the most frightful forms.

What a sight the unhappy sufferers presented! Their legs swollen to an enormous size, and covered with large dark-blue spots; their gums bleeding, and lips so tumid, that articulation was almost impossible.

Clifton was first attacked by the cruel malady, and he was soon followed by Gripper, Brunton, and Strong. Those who escaped were forced to witness the sufferings of the others, for there was but one living room, and this had to be forthwith turned into an hospital, as within a few days thirteen out of the eighteen men, which composed the crew of the *Forward*, were confined to their hammocks. Pen was not attacked, thanks to his vigorous constitution. Shandon exhibited a few premonitory symptoms, but he succeeded in warding these off by exercise and regimen, and remained tolerably well.

The Doctor attended his patients with unremitting care, and his heart was often wrung with the sight of pain he could not relieve. He did all he could to raise the spirits of the dejected men, and by conversation and sympathy, and ingenious devices, to lighten the monotony of their long, weary days. He read aloud, and drew largely on the stores of his wonderful memory for their amusement; but often and often his stories would be interrupted by a groan or moaning cry from one or other, and he would have to break off, and try anew all the resources of his healing art.

Meantime, his own health remained unimpaired. He became no thinner, and his corpulence was better than the warmest clothing. He often congratulated himself on being like the seal and the whale, so encased in good thick fat that he could easily bear the rigours of an Arctic winter.

Haxteras, for his part, felt nothing, either mentally or physically. The sufferings of his men seemed not to touch him in the least, though, perhaps, he would not allow his emotion to appear, and a close observer might have discovered a humane heart beating under that iron exterior.

The thermometer fell still lower ; the deck was quite deserted except by the Esquimaux dogs, who kept howling piteously.

The 8th of December arrived, and the Doctor went out as usual to look at the thermometer. The mercury was frozen—completely frozen !

“Forty-four degrees below zero !” he exclaimed, in dismay.

Yes ! and on this very day the last atom of coal was thrown into the stove.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHRISTMAS.

For a moment despair gained the upper hand, and death seemed staring the unhappy crew in the face—death from cold. The fire got lower each moment, and the effect was soon felt on the temperature of the room. Johnson went to fetch some of his new combustible, and filled the stove with it, adding tow impregnated

with frozen oil, which speedily gave out abundant heat. True, the stench was unbearable, and the boatswain was sufficiently convinced that his substitute for coal would find no favour in the middle-class houses of Liverpool. But what was to be done? It was this fat or nothing.

"And yet," said Johnson, "this stinking stuff may bring us some good after all."

"How's that?" asked the carpenter.

"It will be sure to attract the bears. They will think it a most savoury odour."

"Well, but I don't see what we want with bears," replied Bell.

"Friend Bell," returned Johnson, "we can't reckon on any more seals; they have taken their departure for a long time, and if the bears don't furnish their share of combustible material, I don't see what is to become of us."

"You are right, Johnson. We are in a perilous situation—it is frightful to think of it. Only suppose our stock of this fat coming to an end! I see no way, I must confess!"

"Except one."

"And what is that?" asked Bell.

"Except one, Bell, but the captain would never consent to it; and yet it may come to that," added Johnson, shaking his head, for he knew he had only fat enough to last a week.

The old sailor was right. Several bears were seen to leeward, and the few men that remained well gave them chase. But these animals are endowed with such re-

markable swiftness and such cunning, that they completely baffle their pursuers. It was found impossible to get near them, and not a single ball took effect, even fired by the best shots.

The crew of the brig were certainly in a serious plight. Forty-eight hours without fire in such a temperature would seal their doom.

At last, on the 20th of December, about 3 P.M., things came to a crisis. The fire burnt out, and the sailors stood round the stove gazing at each other with wild, haggard faces. Hatteras remained motionless in his corner. The Doctor paced up and down in an agitated manner, at his wits' end to devise some expedient, not knowing what to say or do.

But others acted for him now. Shandon, cool and determined, and Pen with flashing angry eyes, and two or three of their comrades who were still able to drag themselves along, went towards Hatteras.

"Captain," said Shandon.

But Hatteras, buried in thought, did not hear him.

"Captain!" he said again, touching his hand.

"Sir!" said Hatteras, starting up.

"Captain, we have no fire."

"Well," replied Hatteras.

"If it is your intention to let us perish with cold," said Shandon with terrible irony, "perhaps you will be kind enough to inform us."

"My intention," replied Hatteras in a grave tone, "is that each man shall do his duty to the end."

"There is something higher than duty, captain—the

right of self-preservation. I tell you again we have no fire, and if we don't get one, not a man among us will be alive in two days' time."

"I have no wood," said Hatteras in a hollow voice.

"Very well," exclaimed Pen, passionately ; "when people have no wood, they must go and cut it down where it grows."

Hatteras paled with rage, and said :

"Where may that be ?"

"On deck," was the insolent reply.

"On deck !" repeated the captain, clenching his fist, his eyes sparkling with indignation.

"Certainly," returned Pen ; "when the ship can't sail, burn her."

Hatteras lifted a hatchet when Pen began to speak, and swinging it over his head, would have killed him on the spot, had not the Doctor rushed forward and pulled him aside by main force. The hatchet fell on the ground, sticking fast in the planks.

Johnson, Bell, and Simpson gathered round Hatteras, determined to support his authority, but plaintive moans rose from the sick-beds, and feeble voices were heard imploring fire.

Hatteras had a struggle to command himself sufficiently to speak, but after a few minutes' silence, he said, in a calm tone :

"If we destroyed the ship, how could we get back to England ?"

"Perhaps, sir, we might burn those parts that are not absolutely necessary, such as the gunwale," suggested

Johnson. "We should always have the boats to fall back upon," said Shandon; "and, moreover, what is to hinder us from building a smaller ship out of the remains of the old one?"

"Never!" replied Hatteras.

"But, sir——" began several voices at once.

"We have a great quantity of spirits of wine on board," said Hatteras. "Burn it all to the last drop."

"Well, go and fetch the spirits of wine, my men," said Johnson.

By steeping large wicks in this inflammable liquid a pale flame was soon visible in the stove, and the temperature of the room was raised a little.

During the next few days the wind was south, and the thermometer rose a few degrees. Some of the sailors ventured out again for a few hours, but ophthalmia and scurvy kept the greater part on board still close prisoners.

But the respite was of short duration, and on the 25th the mercury was again frozen in the tube.

By means of spirits of wine, however, the Doctor managed to thaw it, and discovered to his horror that the temperature was 66° below zero. He had not thought it possible that life could be sustained in such conditions.

The ice lay glittering on the flooring, and a thick fog filled the room, mingled with the snow caused by the condensation of the breath of the inmates. The men could hardly see one another: hands and feet had

become almost dead and quite blue. The first symptoms of delirium appeared, and the tongue lost the power of articulation.

From the day that Pen had threatened to burn the ship, Hatteras had almost lived on deck, remaining on the bridge for long hours mounting guard over his treasure: for this wood was like his own flesh, and he would as soon have thought of cutting off a limb as cutting off an inch of it. There he stood, completely armed, and wholly insensible to cold and snow, though the frost had stiffened his clothes, and encased him in an icy covering. Duk always accompanied him, barking and howling.

On the 25th of December, however, he went below for a while, and the Doctor, summoning all his remaining strength, went up to him directly and said:

“Hatteras, we are dying for want of fire.”

“Never!” said Hatteras, understanding the unuttered request that lay in his words.

“It must be done,” replied the Doctor, gently.

“Never!” repeated Hatteras, even more vehemently; “never will I consent. Let them disobey if they choose!”

Johnson and Bell needed no further permission, but rushed on deck, hatchets in hand. Hatteras heard the wood falling beneath their strokes, and wept.

And this was Christmas Day, so dear to English

hearts! the day of family gatherings, when children and children's children cluster so joyously about the fire-side. What a bitter contrast this to those festive hours, ringing with the glad laugh of merry children round their Christmas tree! to those tables groaning with the abundance of roast beef and plum-pudding, and mince pies, and all the rich Christmas viands! Nothing here on all sides but pain, and misery, and despair; nothing of Christmas, save the "Yule log," and this—part of a lost ship, lost amid the ice and snow of the frigid zone.

However, the fire soon made its re-animating influence felt, and steaming bowls of tea and coffee lent their aid in restoring the benumbed men to some degree of physical comfort, and even revived the dying hope in their hearts.

The 1st of January was marked by an unexpected discovery. The weather was mild, and the Doctor had resumed his usual studies. He was reading Sir Edward Belcher's "Narrative of his Polar Expedition," when he came across a passage he had never noticed before. He read it over and over again, to satisfy himself it was no mistake.

Sir Edward stated that after reaching the end of the Queen's Channel, he met with traces of human habitation on the shore.

" 'We found the remains,' he said, 'of dwellings far superior to any of those which would be inhabited by the wandering tribes of Esquimaux. The walls

had good foundations, and there was a paved space, covered with fine gravel. We saw a great quantity of bones of reindeer, and walrus, and seals. *We found coal there.' "*

As the Doctor read these concluding words, an idea crossed his mind, which he determined to communicate to Hatteras forthwith, so, book in hand, he went in search of him.

"Coal, did you say!" exclaimed the captain, when he told him of his discovery.

"Yes, Hatteras, coal! that's to say, our means of salvation."

"But coal on this barren coast," returned Hatteras. "No, that's not possible!"

"Why doubt it, Hatteras? Belcher would never have stated the fact if he had not seen it with his own eyes!"

"Well, granting it to be true, what then, Doctor?"

"We are not more than a hundred miles from the place where Belcher saw this coal; and what's an excursion of a hundred miles? Nothing. Much longer journeys have often been made over the ice in quite as cold weather as this. Let us set off, captain."

"We will!" exclaimed Hatteras, clutching eagerly at the forlorn hope.

Johnson was speedily informed of the project, which met his hearty approval. He communicated the news to the rest. Some applauded the resolve, and some heard it with indifference.

"Coal here?" asked Wall.

"Let them go," whispered Shandon, mysteriously.

But before ever commencing preparations for departure, Hatteras took the utmost pains to calculate the exact position of the *Forward*. This was a matter of the utmost importance, for otherwise it would be impossible to find the ship again after once leaving her. After much difficulty he succeeded in making an accurate reckoning, and went down again to compare it with his chart.

For a minute he looked as if stupefied, and then asked the Doctor if he knew the exact latitude when they had taken up winter quarters.

"Of course I do," was the reply. "It was $78^{\circ} 15'$ latitude, and $95^{\circ} 35'$ longitude."

"Well, then," returned Hatteras, in a low voice, "our ice-field is drifting, we are two degrees farther north, and more to the west, and three hundred miles at least from your coal depôt."

"And these poor fellows are not aware of it!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Hush!" said Hatteras, laying his finger on his lips.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PREPARATIONS FOR DEPARTURE.

HATTERAS would not acquaint his men with the discovery he had made, and he was right, for there was no knowing into what excesses despair might have led them, had they felt themselves thus irresistibly dragged farther north.

To himself, however, the knowledge of the fact afforded the greatest joy. This was the first happy moment he had known for many long months ; but not even to the Doctor did he speak of it, and he had such perfect self-control that his friend never suspected his hidden sentiments, though he sometimes wondered to himself what could make his eye so unusually bright.

By getting nearer the Pole, the *Forward* had got farther away from the coal-bed mentioned by Sir Edward Belcher, and instead of a hundred miles, it would be necessary to go back at least two hundred and fifty miles. However, after a short consultation with Clawbonny and Johnson, it was resolved to adhere to the project.

They reckoned that the journey would take forty days at the outside, and Johnson undertook to provide all that was necessary.

His first care was the sledge. It was of Greenland make, thirty-five inches wide and twenty-four feet long, made of long planks bent up back and front, and

stretched in the form of a bow by strong ropes to give it elasticity. This sledge would run easily over hard ice, but in snowy weather a wooden framework was added, which lifted it a little above the ground. To make it glide along still more smoothly, the bottom was rubbed over, in Esquimaux style, with a mixture of sulphur and snow.

Six dogs were selected as steeds for this equipage—strong, hardy animals, in spite of their lean, skinny appearance, and able to drag 2000 lbs. weight without being over fatigued. The harness was in good condition, and altogether the sledge was a reliable affair.

For camping, a tent was provided, in the event of being unable to construct a snow hut; also a large Mackintosh sheet to spread over the snow, to prevent it from melting by contact with the body; several woollen blankets and buffalo skins, and the Halkett-boat.

The stores consisted of five cases of pemmican, weighing about 450 lbs.; twelve gallons of spirits of wine, tea, and biscuit; together with a little “portable kitchen,” and a quantity of wicks and tow; besides powder and shot, and two double-barrelled guns. Each man, following Captain Parry’s example, was provided with an india-rubber belt, in which tea, coffee, and water could be carried, and kept in a liquid state by the heat of the body, accelerated by the motion of walking.

Johnson bestowed special pains on the manufacture of the snow-shoes. These were fixed on wood, and strapped with leather. They served the purpose of skates, but, where the ground was very hard and slippery,

deer mocassins were better, and each member of the party was therefore furnished with two pairs of both.

These important preparations occupied four whole days. Every morning Hatteras reckoned his exact position, and found that the ice-field had ceased moving. It was absolutely necessary to ascertain this for the sake of returning.

Whom to choose for the expedition was the next consideration. This was a matter of deep thought to Hatteras, for many of the men were useless to take; and yet would it be wise to leave them behind? However, since the lives of all depended on the success of the enterprise, he finally decided to take none with him but tried and trusty followers.

Shandon consequently was excluded, but he showed no regrets on that score. James Wall was out of the question, for he could not rise from his hammock.

None of the sick men were getting worse, happily, and as their treatment consisted mainly in constant friction and large doses of lemon-juice, the Doctor's presence was not required. He therefore resolved to head the party, and no one made the faintest protest against his decision.

Johnson was most desirous to accompany the captain in his perilous undertaking; but Hatteras took him aside, and in an affectionate, almost agitated, manner, said:

"Johnson, I have no confidence in any one but yourself; you are the only officer to whom I can entrust my ship. I must know you are here to watch Shandon

and the others. Winter has them fast in iron chains, but who knows what wickedness they may be capable of? You shall be furnished with formal instructions to assume command if necessary. You will be my second self. Our absence will extend to four or five weeks at most, and I shall be easy in having you here while I am obliged to be away. You must have wood, Johnson, I know, but as much as possible spare my poor ship. You understand me, Johnson?"

"Yes, captain," said the old sailor, "and I will remain here since it is your wish."

"Thanks!" said Hatteras, grasping his hand warmly. Then he added:

"If you do not see us come back, Johnson, wait till the ice breaks up, and try to push farther towards the Pole; but should the others oppose this, don't think of us at all, but take the ship back to England."

"Is this truly your will, captain?"

"My absolute will," replied Hatteras.

"Your commands shall be obeyed," said Johnson, simply.

The Doctor felt the loss of his old friend, but he knew Hatteras had decided for the best.

The two others chosen were Bell and Simpson. Bell was in good health, and a brave, devoted fellow, and would be most useful in putting up the tent, and making snow-houses. Simpson was a man of softer mould, but he was willing, and might be serviceable in hunting and fishing.

Thus, then, the detachment consisted of Hatteras, Clawbonny, Bell, Simpson, and the faithful Duk—four men and seven dogs.

During the first few days of January, the temperature remained on the average 33° below zero. Hatteras eagerly watched for a change of weather, and often consulted the barometer: but in these high latitudes no reliance can be placed on any barometer. When it is high, it often brings snow and rain, and when it is low, fine weather.

At last, on the 5th of January, an east wind brought a temporary rise in the temperature of 15° , and Hatteras resolved to start next day. He was impatient to be off, for he could not bear to see the brig cut to pieces before his eyes. The entire poop had already gone to feed the stove.

On the 6th, therefore, the order to set out was given. The Doctor gave his last injunctions to his patients, and Bell and Simpson shook hands silently with their comrades. Hatteras was about to bid his men "good-bye" aloud, but black scowling looks met him on all sides, and he fancied a mocking smile lurked on Shandon's lips. He was silent, and perhaps for an instant hesitated about leaving; but it was too late now to alter his plan. The sledge was packed and harnessed, and Bell had already gone on. The rest of the party followed, and Johnson accompanied them for about a quarter of a mile. Hatteras would not allow him to go farther, so he bade them farewell with many a lingering look, and returned to the brig.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ACROSS THE ICE-FIELDS.

THE little band of adventurers went on towards the south-east. Simpson managed the sledge, aided zealously by Duk. Hatteras and the Doctor brought up the rear. And Bell was the scout in advance.

The falling of the thermometer announced an approaching snow storm, which soon began and greatly increased the difficulties of the way. The surface of the ice was very uneven and rugged, and the dogs were constantly stumbling, at great risk of overturning the sledge.

Hatteras and his companions wrapped themselves closely in their skin clothing, of rude Greenland make, and certainly somewhat unshapely, but admirably adapted to the necessities of the climate. The hoods were drawn right over head and face, and nothing left exposed but eyes, nose, and mouth.

They walked along over the monotonous plain almost in silence, for it was torture to open the mouth: sharp crystals formed immediately between the lips, which even the warm breath was powerless to melt.

Numerous traces of bears and foxes were met with, but not a solitary animal was perceived during the whole of the first day. It did not matter much, for it would have been both useless and dangerous to hunt

them, since the sledge was heavily enough loaded already.

It is customary generally with exploring parties to lighten the sledges by depositing stores on the way at intervals, which are taken up on returning; but this was impracticable on ice-fields, which might drift off at any moment.

At mid-day Hatteras made a halt for breakfast, which consisted of pemmican and hot tea, and glad enough were the poor travellers of the reviving beverage.

After resting an hour, the march was resumed, and by night they had gone about twenty miles. Men and dogs were tired out: but in spite of fatigue, a snow-hut must be built before they could lie down to sleep. This was an hour and a half's work. Bell showed great skill in cutting the blocks and laying one above another in a circular dome-like form. The snow served for mortar to fill up all interstices, and became so hard that the whole hut soon appeared as if made of one solid piece. The only entrance was a narrow opening, into which they had to crawl on all-fours. The Doctor squeezed in somehow, though it was rather a tight fit, and the others followed. The portable kitchen was lighted, and supper speedily prepared.

When the repast was over, the Mackintosh was spread on the ground, and shoes and socks put to dry by the little spirit stove, and then three of the party wrapped themselves in their warm blankets and went to sleep, leaving the fourth man to keep watch and prevent

the opening from getting stopped up. This was necessary for the safety of the rest, and each man had charge in his turn.

Duk shared his master's quarters. His brethren were outside, and found a bed for themselves among the snow.

Sleep soon came to the weary men, and at 3 A.M. the Doctor rose to mount guard. He could hear the storm raging without, but within the hut the temperature was tolerably comfortable.

Next morning at six o'clock the monotonous march began once more. It was easier walking, however, for the snow had hardened. They often came across what looked like cairns, or possibly Esquimaux hiding-places, and the Doctor could not rest easy till he had demolished one ; but, to his disappointment, he found it was nothing but a block of ice.

"What did you hope to find, Clawbonny?" asked Hatteras. "Are we not the first that have ever trod this ice?"

"Likely enough, and yet who knows!"

"Don't let us waste time in useless searches," returned the captain. "I am in haste to get back to my ship, even without the coal we so need!"

"Doctor," said Hatteras, often, "I was wrong to leave the brig. It was a mistake. A captain's place is on board, and nowhere else."

"Johnson is there."

"I know that, but let us make haste."

The sledge went swiftly on, and owing to some

peculiar phosphorence in the snow, seemed traversing red-hot ground, raising a cloud of sparks as it ran along. The Doctor hurried forward to examine this phenomenon more closely, but all of a sudden, in trying to jump over a hummock, he disappeared. Bell ran towards the spot immediately, but the Doctor was nowhere to be seen, and though he shouted his name, there was no reply till the captain, who came up just then with Simpson, called out :

“ Doctor ! where are you ? ”

“ Down here, in a hole,” was the reassuring answer. “ Throw me the end of a rope, and let me get to the earth’s surface again.”

The hole into which he had fallen was full ten feet deep, but his three companions succeeded in drawing him safely up, though not without difficulty.

“ Are you hurt ? ” asked Hatteras.

“ Never a bit ! there is no fear of me,” he replied, shaking the snow off his good-tempered face.

“ But how did it happen ? ”

“ Oh ! it is all owing to refraction—always that stupid refraction,” he said, laughing. “ I thought I was going to jump over a gap not more than a foot broad, and I found myself in a hole ten feet deep. Take a lesson from me, and don’t venture a step till you have tried the ground with your staff. There is no trusting to one’s senses in this region, for both ears and eyes deceive one.”

“ Can we go on ? ” said Hatteras.

"Oh, go on, by all means. This little tumble will do me more good than harm."

Once more they set off, and by the time they halted for the night had gone a distance of five-and-twenty miles.

While the hut was being constructed for their night quarters, nothing would serve the Doctor but he must climb to the top of an iceberg and look about him.

The moon was almost full, and shining in the clear sky with extraordinary brilliancy. The stars, too, were wondrously beautiful, and as he gazed over the plain below, the surpassing grandeur of the spectacle amply repaid for the fatigue of the ascent. It resembled some vast cemetery full of monuments of every description, in which twenty generations lay slumbering; and in spite of cold and weariness, the Doctor could not tear himself from the scene. He was so absorbed and entranced that his companions could scarcely persuade him to come down. But the hut was ready, and it was high time to think of sleep, so he crept in after the others, and was soon in the arms of Morpheus.

The next few days passed without any particular incidents, sometimes making quicker and sometimes slower progress, till they reached the 15th of January.

The moon was now in her last quarter, and only visible for a short time. The sun, though never appearing above the horizon, made a sort of dim twilight for about six hours in the day. But it was too faint to show the road, and the travellers had to steer the way

by the compass. Bell went first, and set up a landmark for the rest to follow, so as to keep in a straight course as far as possible.

On the 15th of February, which was on a Sunday, Hatteras calculated that they had made a hundred miles. He devoted the morning to repairing sundry articles and to religious worship, and started again about noon.

The temperature was cold, only 32° above zero, and the air very clear.

Suddenly, without any warning and without any apparent reason, a sort of vapour began to rise from the ground, and condensed into minute frozen particles, instantly filling the atmosphere like dense fog, and rising to the height of about ninety feet, where it remained stationary. It was impossible to see a foot before one, and long prismatic crystals hung from everybody's clothes.

This was the frost rime that had surprised the travellers, and its first effect was to make them wish to keep close together. Each began feeling and fumbling for the other, and calling out his name. But in this dense fog there was not only no seeing, but no hearing, for sounds cannot pass through it.

The same thought apparently struck each to fire a gun as a signal. But the confusion that followed was indescribable, for the noise was echoed far and wide. in one continuous roll.

Each man was left to his own instinct, and each acted in a characteristic manner. Hatteras stopped

short, and stood with his arms folded to wait patiently. Simpson managed to keep fast by the sledge. Bell felt for foot-marks on the ground, and the Doctor went tumbling about among the great blocks of ice, now going to the left and then to the right, and then losing himself completely.

After stumbling along in this fashion for five minutes or so, he said to himself :

"This can't last ! Strange climate ; rather too freaky for my taste. There is no reckoning on it. Hallo, captain, where are you ?" he shouted again.

But there was no response, and he resolved to reload his gun and fire a second time.

While doing this, he fancied he could discern the outlines of some dark object close by, and he called out :

"At last ! Hatteras, Bell, Simpson, who is it ? Speak !"

A low growl was the only reply.

"Ha ! what can this be ?" thought the good little man.

The moving mass came nearer, its proportions being increased by the fog rather than diminished. A terrible suspicion crossed the Doctor's mind.

"It is a bear !" he said to himself. And a bear it actually was, of huge dimensions. Bruin had lost his way in the fog like his neighbours, and was going hither and thither in all directions, almost knocking right against his enemies, though he little imagined their proximity.

"I'm in a pretty fix now," thought the Doctor, remaining quite still.

The animal sometimes came so close to him that he could feel his breath, and the next minute he disappeared in the frost rime. Sometimes he caught a glimpse of enormous paws beating the air, and more than once they touched him so near that his clothes were torn by the sharp claws, and he leaped back in affright.

But in leaping back the Doctor felt his foot struck rising ground, and by the help of his hand he succeeded in getting on the top of first one block of ice and then another and another, till he reached at last the summit of an iceberg nearly ninety feet high, and found himself in clear air, quite above the level of the fog.

"That's capital!" he said, and looking round, discovered his three companions also emerging from the frost rime.

"Hatteras!"

"Doctor Clawbonny!"

"Bell!"

"Simpson!"

These exclamations were almost simultaneous. The sky was illumined by a magnificent halo, which tinged the frost rime with its soft rays, and gave it the appearance of liquid silver, from which the peaks of the icebergs issued.

The travellers discovered they were in a sort of amphitheatre about a hundred feet in diameter, and

though they had each clambered up different icebergs, and were considerable distances apart, yet, thanks to the intense cold, and extreme purity of the atmosphere, they could hear one another's voice quite easily, and were able to carry on a conversation.

"Where's the sledge?" asked the captain.

"Down there, eighty feet below," replied Simpson.

"Is it all right?"

"First-rate."

"And what about the bear?" inquired the Doctor.

"What bear?"

"The bear I met, that almost made me break my neck."

"A bear!" exclaimed Hatteras; "we had better look after him."

"No, no!" said the Doctor; "we should only lose ourselves, and gain nothing by it."

"Well, but suppose he fell on our dogs?"

At that very moment Duk began barking furiously, and Hatteras exclaimed:

"That's Duk! I'm sure there's something up! I'm going down, at any rate."

"Stop, Hatteras, stop! I think the fog is clearing," said the Doctor.

It was not clearing, but it was gradually getting lower, like a pond getting empty. It seemed to sink into the earth from whence it had risen.

Soon the top of the sledge appeared, then the dogs; then about thirty other animals were seen, and large, shapeless moving masses. Duk was leaping

and jumping about, appearing and disappearing in the fog.

"Foxes!" exclaimed Bell.

"Bears!" said the Doctor. "I can see one—three—five!"

"Let's see to the dogs and the provisions," shouted Simpson.

It was high time, for a whole pack of foxes and bears had attacked the sledge and were making fine havoc of the food. The dogs barked might and main, but their fury had no effect, and the work of pillage was fast going on.

"Fire!" cried Hatteras, discharging his gun.

His companions followed his example immediately, to the evident alarm of the four-footed robbers, for the whole troop scampered away at once, and speedily disappeared among the icebergs.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE CAIRN.

THIS peculiar phenomenon of the Arctic regions lasted about three-quarters of an hour, so that the bears and foxes had time to regale themselves comfortably. The supply was most opportune for the poor starving animals, and they had not been backward in profiting

by it, for the marks of their sharp claws were all over the sledge. Cases of pemmican were broken open and emptied, bags of biscuits devoured, tea strewn among the snow, and one keg of spirits of wine smashed to pieces, and all the contents lost; blankets, and skins, and coverings tossed here and there in all directions—nothing had been left untouched by the famished and voracious beasts.

“This is a bad job for us,” said Bell, contemplating the scene of desolation.

“One that can’t be remedied, I fear,” added Simpson.

“We had better see what mischief has been done first, and then talk about it afterwards, I think,” said the Doctor.

Hatteras made no remark, but busied himself silently in collecting the scattered bags and cases. The loss of any of the spirits of wine was most vexatious, for without it there would be an end to tea and coffee, or any warm beverage whatever. After picking what biscuits and pemmican were still eatable, the Doctor made an estimate of the damage done, and found that 200 lbs. of pemmican and 150 lbs. of biscuits had disappeared; so that if the journey was to be continued, they must be content with half the usual rations.

It became a question, therefore, whether to go on or return to the ship, and recommence the expedition. But to return would be to lose 150 miles already gained, and, moreover, to return without the coal would have a most disastrous effect on the crew!

All but Simpson decided in favour of going on, even

at the price of the hardest privations. The poor fellow's health had begun to give away, and he was anxious to be back on board ship ; but, finding he stood alone in his opinion, he yielded to the others, and resumed his place beside the sledge.

The monotonous journey went on much as usual, unmarked by any fresh event till the 17th of January, when the whole aspect of the region suddenly changed. A great number of sharp towering peaks, like pointed pyramids, appeared on the horizon, and the soil in certain places rose above the snow. It was composed apparently of gneiss, schist, and quartz, with some admixture of chalky rock. The travellers had reached firm land once more, and this land could be none other than New Cornwall.

The Doctor congratulated himself on being off the treacherous ice, and only a hundred miles from Cape Belcher ; but, strangely enough, the difficulties of the journey increased rather than diminished, and they soon had cause to regret the smooth, almost unbroken ice over which the sledge could glide with comparative ease, for the road was rugged in the extreme, full of sharp rocks, and precipices, and crevices. They were obliged to make a circuitous course towards the interior, to get to the top of the steep cliffs on the coast, and across tremendous gorges, where the snow was piled up thirty or forty feet high.

It was hard work to drag the sledge along, for the dogs were exhausted, and the men had to harness themselves and help. Several times everything had to be

taken out of it before they could get to the top of some steep hill, the glassy sides of which afforded no foothold for man or beast.

On the evening of the second day after their arrival on the coast of New Cornwall, the men were so completely exhausted that they were unable to erect their usual snow-hut. They passed the night under the tent, wrapped in their buffalo skins, and tried to dry their wet stockings by the heat of their own bodies. Before morning the thermometer fell to 44° and the mercury froze.

The inevitable consequences of such exposure followed. Simpson's health was shaken alarmingly; an obstinate cold clung to him, and violent rheumatic pains, which obliged him to lie all day on the sledge. Bell had to take his place in guiding the dogs, for, though he was far from well, he was not unable to keep about. The Doctor also suffered considerably, but he never complained; he held out bravely, and went first to act as scout. Hatteras, impassible, impenetrable, and hard as ever, was as strong as the first day, and walked silently behind the sledge.

On the 20th January the temperature was so low that the slightest exertion was followed by complete prostration; and yet the road was so rugged and difficult that the Doctor, and Bell, and Hatteras, too, had to harness themselves to the sledge with the dogs. Constantly jolting over the uneven ground had broken the front part, and it was necessary to

stop and repair it. Delays like these soon became frequent.

The three men were jogging along through a deep ravine, where the snow was up to their waists, and the perspiration was streaming from every pore in spite of the intense cold, when Bell, who was nearest the Doctor, looked at him in alarm, and, without saying a word, caught up a handful of snow, and began rubbing his worthy friend's face as vigorously as possible, to the great bewilderment of the Doctor, who tried to push him off, exclaiming :

“What now, Bell?”

But Bell still went on rubbing, till the little man's eyes, nose, and mouth were all full of snow, and he called out again :

“I say, Bell, what's all this? Are you mad? What do you mean?”

“I mean this, that you have me to thank for it if you still have a nose.”

“A nose?” replied the Doctor, putting up his hand to his face.

“Yes, Mr. Clawbonny, you were completely frost-bitten. Your nose was quite white when I looked at you, and without my rough treatment you would have lost an ornament that is very necessary in life, though rather inconvenient in travelling.”

Bell was right. A few minutes longer, and the Doctor's nose would have been gone; but, happily, friction had restored the circulation, and the danger was past.

"Thanks, Bell; I'll do as much for you some day, perhaps."

"I quite reckon on it, and Heaven grant we may have no worse misfortunes to come!" replied the carpenter.

"Ah! you refer to Simpson; the poor fellow is in great pain."

"Have you any fear for him?" asked Hatteras, quickly.

"I have, captain."

"What is it you apprehend, Doctor?"

"A violent attack of scurvy. His legs are swelling already, and his gums are affected. There he lies wrapped up in the blankets, half-frozen, and these constant jolts aggravate his sufferings. I pity him, Hatteras, but I can do nothing for him!"

"Poor Simpson!" murmured Bell.

"Perhaps we might rest a day or two," suggested the Doctor.

"Rest a day or two!" cried Hatteras, "when the lives of eighteen men hang on our return!"

"Still——" began the Doctor.

"Clawbonny, Bell, listen to me. We have only food enough for twenty days! Can we afford to waste an instant?"

Neither the Doctor nor Bell made any reply, and the sledge went on.

In the evening the little cavalcade stopped at the foot of an ice-hill, in which Bell soon cut out a cave to shelter them for the night.

The Doctor stayed up with Simpson, while the others slept, for the scurvy had made frightful ravages on the poor man's frame already, and he moaned piteously with pain.

"Ah ! Mr. Clawbonny," he said.

"Come, cheer up, my lad !" replied the Doctor.

"I shall never go back ! I feel it ! I can go no farther ; I would rather die."

The Doctor only replied by redoubling his attentions. Forgetting his own fatigue, he busied himself in preparing some soothing draught for his suffering patient, for lime-juice and friction were now powerless.

When morning came, the unfortunate man had to be replaced on the sledge, though he entreated to be left behind to die in peace. The weary march was resumed, and increasing difficulties, for icy fogs pierced the travellers to the very marrow, and hail and snow lashed their faces with merciless severity.

Duk, like his master, seemed to feel nothing, and showed wonderful sagacity in finding out the best road.

On the morning of the 23rd, when it was nearly quite dark, as there was a new moon, Duk was suddenly missing. He had been out of sight for several hours, and Hatteras grew uneasy, for the tracks of bears were pretty numerous. He was just considering what was best to be done, when he caught the sound of loud, furious barking in the distance, and, urging the sledge forward, soon came up to his faithful beast at the bottom of a ravine.

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Duk was standing motionless in front of a sort of cairn, and barking violently.

"This time it is a cairn, at all events," said the Doctor, getting out of harness.

"What's that to us?" asked Hatteras.

"Hatteras, if it is a cairn, it may contain some valuable document for us, or perhaps it is a depôt of provisions, and that is worth our while to look at."

"And what European can have been this way?" said the captain, shrugging his shoulders.

"But though no European has been, may not the Esquimaux have been here and made a hiding-place for the spoils of their hunting and fishing? It is quite in keeping with their habits."

"Well, well, Clawbonny, examine it if you choose, but I question if you get anything for your pains."

By the help of mattocks the cairn was soon demolished, and a box was discovered, inside which was a paper quite damp with moisture. The Doctor seized it with a beating heart, and handed it to Hatteras, who read as follows:—

"Altam —, *Porpoise*, 13 Dec. 1860, 12° longitude, S., 55° lat."

"The *Porpoise*!" said the Doctor.

"The *Porpoise*!" repeated Hatteras. "I know no vessel of that name that has been in these seas."

"It is quite evident that whatever vessel she is, her crew, or possibly some of her shipwrecked men, passed this way less than two months ago," replied Clawbonny.

"That is quite certain," added Bell.

"What shall we do?" asked the Doctor.

"Continue our journey," replied Hatteras, coldly.

"I know nothing of the *Porpoise*, but I know that the brig *Forward* is waiting our return."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DEATH OF SIMPSON.

THE journey was resumed, each of the party absorbed in his own reflections about the unexpected discovery just made. Hatteras knit his brows uneasily, and said to himself:

"What vessel can this be? What is she doing so near the Pole?"

The Doctor and Bell only thought of going to the rescue of some poor fellows like themselves, or being rescued by them.

But before long they were engrossed enough with their own dangers and difficulties, for their situation became hourly more perilous.

Simpson was getting gradually worse, and the Doctor's practised eye saw death rapidly approaching. He could do nothing for him; he was suffering acutely himself from ophthalmia, which might end in total blindness without care. The twilight was strong

enough now to cause a glaring reflection on the snow which burnt the eyes. Spectacles would have been some protection, but it was impossible to wear them, as the glasses became encrusted with ice immediately, and consequently perfectly opaque, and yet it was necessary to keep a constant look-out to avoid accidents. This must be done at all risks, so Bell and the Doctor agreed to undertake the duty in turn, and bandage their eyes in the intervals.

On the 25th of January the road became even more dangerous and difficult, from the steep declivities they met with constantly, when one false step would have precipitated them into deep ravines.

Towards evening a violent tempest swept over the snowy ridges, and soon increased to such a hurricane, that they were forced to stop and lie down on the ground. But the temperature was so low that they would all inevitably have been frozen to death, had not Bell succeeded after much difficulty in making a snow hut, in which they took shelter and recruited themselves scantily with a few morsels of pemmican and some hot tea. There were only four gallons of spirits of wine now remaining, as it was not only used in making tea and coffee, but in getting water to drink, for it must not be imagined that snow can be employed to quench thirst without being melted. In temperate countries, where the thermometer is scarcely ever so low as freezing point, it might not be injurious, but beyond the polar circle it is quite a different matter. The snow there is so intensely cold, that one could no

more lay hold of it with the naked hand than red-hot iron ; consequently, there is such a difference of temperature between it and the stomach, that swallowing any portion would actually cause suffocation. The Esquimaux would rather endure prolonged agonies of thirst than attempt to relieve it with snow.

At three in the morning, when the storm outside was at the worst, the Doctor was taking his turn at watch, and sitting in a corner of the hut, leaning against the wall, when a piteous moan from Simpson aroused his attention. He rose hastily to go to him, and struck his head against the roof, but thinking nothing more of it, he stooped down beside Simpson, and began rubbing his blue swollen legs. He had continued the friction for about a quarter of an hour, when he wanted to shift his position. On trying to get up, for he had been kneeling, he knocked his head against the roof a second time.

“This is strange !” he said to himself, and put his hand to feel above him. The roof was sinking, there was no mistake.

“Quick, quick, friends !” he exclaimed, rousing Bell and Hatteras, who started up in alarm, and in their turn struck their heads against the roof.

“We shall be crushed !” cried the Doctor. “Out ! out ! this minute.”

It was pitch-dark inside, but they managed to drag Simpson through the opening, and just saved themselves in time, for the next minute the entire hut fell in with a loud noise.

The unfortunate travellers were now exposed to the full fury of the tempest, in addition to the extreme cold. Hatteras hastened to put up the tent; but it would not stand before the violence of the hurricane, and all they could do was to shelter themselves beneath the canvas, which was soon covered with a thick coating of snow, and preserved the poor fellows from being frozen alive.

Towards morning the storm abated, and the little party prepared to start afresh. In harnessing the dogs, Bell discerned that the wretched, half-starved animals had begun to gnaw their leather traces, and two of the beasts were evidently ill, and would not be able to go very far.

They set out again, however, for sixty miles more had yet to be traversed before they reached the goal.

On the 26th, Bell, who was in advance, called out suddenly to his companions. On hastening towards him, he pointed out a gun placed bolt upright against a mass of ice.

Hatteras lifted it up, and found it loaded and in good condition.

"The men belonging to the *Porpoise* cannot be far off!" exclaimed the Doctor.

On examination, the gun proved to be of American manufacture, and the very touch of it sent a thrill through the veins of the captain.

"Forward!" he said, in hollow tones, and the cavalcade marched on, down the steep sides of the mountains. Simpson appeared to be insensible; his strength was too far gone now to moan.

The storm had by no means ceased, and the sledge went slower and slower. Only a few miles' progress was made in twenty-four hours, and, notwithstanding the severest economy, the stock of provisions was fast decreasing ; but as long as more than enough remained for the journey back, Hatteras pushed forward.

On the 27th, a sextant was found half buried in the snow, and then a gourd still containing some brandy, or rather a lump of ice, in the centre of which all the spirit had taken refuge in the form of a ball of snow.

It was evident that Hatteras had unintentionally got on the track of some great disaster, for in pursuing the only practicable road, he was constantly finding evidences of a terrible shipwreck. The Doctor kept a sharp look-out for any fresh cairns, but had seen none hitherto.

He felt saddened by the thought, however, that even should any poor creature be discovered, he could do nothing to help them. His companions and himself were beginning to be in want of everything. Their clothes were torn, and their provisions getting very scant. Should the shipwrecked crew be numerous, they would all perish with hunger. Hatteras appeared anxious to hurry away from the chance of meeting them ; but was he not right ? Was he not responsible for the lives of his men ? Ought he to compromise their safety by bringing strangers on board his ship ?

Yet these strangers were fellow-men, perhaps fellow-countrymen ! Ought they to be abandoned without at least an effort to save them ? The Doctor

asked Bell his opinion about it, but could get no reply. Suffering had hardened his heart. Clawbonny did not dare to appeal to Hatteras—all he could do was to trust to Providence.

Towards evening Simpson grew worse, and his end seemed near. His limbs were rigid, and his face wore a terrible despairing look, which changed to one of fierce vindictive rage, whenever his glance fell on Hatteras. A whole volume of accusations and reproaches, perhaps not unmerited, might be read in the expression of his eye.

Hatteras did not go near him; he evidently shunned his presence, and was more taciturn, reserved, and incommunicative than ever.

It was a fearful night. The storm raged with redoubled violence, and three times the tent had been torn down, and the snow-drift had beat piteously on the unsheltered men, blinding their eyes, freezing them to the marrow, and cutting their faces with the sharp pieces of ice broken off the surrounding icebergs. The dogs howled lamentably, and poor Simpson lay dying. Bell succeeded once more in securing the tent, which, frail as it was, protected them from snow, if not from cold, but a sudden blast tore it up a fourth time, and whirled it completely away.

“Really this is beyond endurance!” exclaimed Bell.

“Courage!” said the Doctor, catching hold of his arm to keep himself from being blown down the ravine.

The death-rattle was heard in Simpson’s throat.

Suddenly he made one expiring effort, half raised himself, shook his clenched fist at Hatteras, who looked at him with fixed steady gaze, and fell back lifeless, with the unspoken execration on his lips.

"Dead!" exclaimed the Doctor.

"Dead!" echoed Bell.

Hatteras came forward to look, but was driven back by the wind. The dead man counted him his murderer, but he was not overwhelmed by the accusation, though a tear escaped his eye, and stiffened on his pale cheek.

This was the first of the crew that had fallen a victim—the first who would never return to England—the first who paid the penalty with his life of the captain's indomitable obstinacy.

The Doctor and Bell gazed at him with a sort of terror, as he stood motionless the livelong night, resting on his stick, as if defying the tempest that roared about him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE RETURN TO THE "FORWARD."

ABOUT six in the morning, the wind suddenly shifted north, and became calm. The sky cleared, and the first glimmer of twilight silvered the horizon, to be

succeeded in a few days by the golden rays of the sun.

Hatteras went up to his dejected companions, and said, in a gentle, sad voice :

"My friends, we are more than sixty miles still from the spot mentioned by Belcher. We have just barely enough food to last us back to the ship. To go farther would be to expose ourselves to certain death, without profit to anyone. We will retrace our steps."

"You have come to a good resolution, Hatteras, I think," said the Doctor. "I would have followed you wherever you had chosen to go: but our strength is diminishing day by day, and we can scarcely drag one leg after the other. I heartily approve of your decision."

"And you are of the same mind, Bell?" asked Hatteras.

"Yes, captain, I am," was the reply.

"Very well, then," returned Hatteras, "we will give ourselves two days' rest. That is not too much. The sledge is in great need of repair. I think our best plan will be to make a snow-hut, to shelter us till we are ready to begin our journey back."

This point settled, all three set to work with ardour, and soon built up a hut at the bottom of the ravine where they had last halted.

It must have cost Hatteras a tremendous struggle to relinquish his project. All this toil and trouble wasted, and one man's life into the bargain! And how

would he be received by the crew, returning thus empty handed? But Hatteras felt he could not hold out longer.

He gave all his attention now to the thorough repair of the sledge. It had not more than 200 lbs. weight to carry, and was soon brought into working trim. The worn-out, tattered garments were mended, and new snow-shoes and mocassins replaced the old ones, which were no longer wearable. These necessary occupations took up one entire day and the morning of another, the poor fellows resting themselves at the same time after their sore fatigues, and trying to get up their strength for the weary march back.

Ever since they had been in the hut, the Doctor had remarked Duk's strange behaviour. The animal kept running in and out, and going round and round a heap of snow and ice, giving occasionally a low bark and wagging his tail impatiently, with an inquiring look at his master.

Clawbonny could not understand what ailed the dog, but at last came to the conclusion that his restlessness was caused by the sight of Simpson's corpse, which there had not been time yet to bury. He resolved to have it interred that very day, as they were to set off next morning as soon as it was light.

Bell undertook to assist, and the two, provided with mattocks, set off together to dig a deep hole in the bottom of the ravine. The heap round which Duk kept watch seemed the most favourable spot, and they proceeded to lift off the ice and snow, which seemed

lying in layers. After removing the snow, they attacked the ice ; but at the third stroke the Doctor's mattock encountered some hard substance, which proved to be a fragment of a wine bottle. Bell, who was at work on the opposite side, turned up that same instant a crumpled-up bag, in which were some pieces of biscuit in a perfect state of preservation.

"Heigho !" exclaimed the Doctor. "What's this, I wonder ?"

He called out to Hatteras, who came up immediately.

Duk still kept on barking, and scratching at the ice with his paws.

"Can we have come upon a depôt of provisions ?" asked the Doctor.

"Possibly," said Bell.

Hatteras advanced no opinion, but simply said :

"Go on digging."

More fragments of food soon appeared, and then a case of pemmican about a quarter full.

"If it is a depôt, the bears have certainly been here before us ; for see, nothing is whole !" said Hatteras.

"It is to be feared that is the case," replied Clawbonny, "for——"

He did not finish his sentence, for he was interrupted by an exclamation from Bell, and, looking across, saw he had uncovered a human leg !

"A corpse !" cried the Doctor.

"It is no depôt," said Hatteras ; "it is a tomb."

When the corpse was entirely disinterred, it proved to be that of a young man not more than thirty years of age. He wore the common dress of Arctic navigators, and the Doctor could not form an opinion as to the date of his death, for the body was in a state of perfect preservation.

Ere long, a second corpse was dug out, a man about fifty apparently, whose countenance bore traces of evident suffering.

"These men have never been buried!" exclaimed the Doctor. "They have met their death by just such an accident as almost befell ourselves."

"You are right, Mr. Clawbonny," replied Bell.

"Go on," said Hatteras.

Bell felt half afraid, for who could say how many more bodies might be under that heap of ice?

"Their snow hut has fallen in," said the Doctor. "Perhaps some poor fellow may be still living. Let us see."

The whole mass was speedily cleared away, and a third body dragged out; that of a man about forty. His appearance was not so cadaverous as the others, and on examining him closely, the Doctor thought he could perceive some faint tokens of life.

"He is not dead!" he exclaimed, lifting him up with Bell's assistance, and carrying him into the hut; while Hatteras stood motionless and unconcerned, contemplating the scene of the catastrophe.

The Doctor proceeded to strip the exhumed man entirely, and finding no trace of any wound about him,

set to work, with Bell, to try the effect of vigorous friction with wisps of tow steeped in spirits of wine. By slow degrees they succeeded in restoring some animation, but the poor fellow was in such a state of utter exhaustion, that he was quite unable to articulate, and his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth as if frozen.

Leaving Bell to continue the treatment, Dr. Clawbonny searched the pockets of his patient to see if he could find any letters or papers. But they were empty.

He went out to Hatteras, and found him standing with the half-burnt envelope of a letter in his hand, which he had found in the ruins of the hut. This much of the direction written on it was still legible :—

Altamont.
— Porpoise.
— New York.

"Altamont!" exclaimed the Doctor. "Ship *Porpoise*, New York!"

"An American!" said Hatteras, with a start.

"I will save him," said the Doctor, "as sure as I'm alive, and we'll get to the bottom then of this mystery."

He returned to Altamont and redoubled his efforts, till he had the satisfaction of bringing the unfortunate man back to life, though not to consciousness. He could neither see, nor hear, nor speak. He was alive, and that was all.

Next morning Hatteras came up to the Doctor and said :

"We cannot delay our return. We must be off!"

"Let us be off by all means, Hatteras. The sledge is not loaded, we can lay this poor fellow on it, and take him with us."

"So be it," said Hatteras; "but let us bury these dead bodies first."

The unknown sailors were laid once more in their icy grave, and poor Simpson's form filled the place of Altamont. A brief prayer was spoken as a last adieu, and then the three men turned silently away, and commenced their journey towards the ship.

Two of the dogs being dead, Duk came and offered his services as plainly as a dumb beast could, and a most effective coadjutor he proved, working with the conscience and the will of a Greenlander.

The return march was unmarked by any particular incidents. February being the coldest month of the Arctic winter, the ice was uniformly hard and unbroken, and though the travellers suffered intensely from the low temperature, they had no fierce storms to contend with during its continuance.

The sun had reappeared since the 31st January, and each day rose higher above the horizon.

The Doctor and Bell were at the end of their strength, and nearly blind and lame. Poor Bell was forced to use crutches.

Altamont still breathed, but he was in a state of complete insensibility, and sometimes the Doctor despaired, till unremitting care again revived the flickering spark of life.

Hatteras thought night and day of his brig, and full of anxious forebodings and questionings as to the state in which he might find her, he hurried impatiently forward, always in advance of the others.

On the 24th of February, in the early morning, he came to a sudden stop.

About three hundred paces distant he saw a bright red glare, from which an immense volume of black smoke rose up towards the sky.

"Look at that smoke!" he shouted. His heart beat violently, and again he shouted to his companions:

"Look! Down there! All that smoke! My ship is on fire."

"It can't be the *Forward*," said Bell. "We are more than three miles away."

"Yes, it is," replied the Doctor. "It is the mirage which makes her seem so near us."

"Let us run," said Hatteras, rushing forward. His companions followed with what speed they could, leaving Duk to guard the sledge.

An hour afterwards and they came in sight of the vessel. It was a terrible spectacle! The ship was blazing in the midst of the icebergs which surrounded her. Flames enveloped the keel, and Hatteras could catch the sound of her cracking timbers. A few paces distant a man was seen, flinging up his arms wildly, and gazing in mute despair.

This solitary man was old Johnson. Hatteras ran towards him, exclaiming in broken tones:

"My ship! my ship!"

"You, captain! Is it you?" cried Johnson.

"Stop! Not a step farther!"

"Tell me," said Hatteras, with a terrible look on his face.

"The villains!" replied Johnson. "They set the ship on fire and started off, forty-eight hours ago!"

"Curse them!" said Hatteras, fiercely.

Just then a tremendous explosion was heard which shook the whole region, and laid the icebergs flat on the ice. The flames had reached the gunpowder and blown the ship to atoms. For a minute there was a dense cloud of smoke, and then the *Forward* disappeared in a gulf of fire.

Bell and the Doctor came up that same instant, and found the captain overwhelmed with despair. But suddenly he roused himself, and said, in a strong, cheery voice:

"Friends! the cowards have fled! Fortune favours the brave. Johnson and Bell, you have courage; Doctor, you have science; I have faith. Yonder is the North Pole. Let's begin again."

Such manly, courageous words put new life into the hearts of his companions, and yet their situation was indeed terrible to contemplate. Four men, and one of them dying, forsaken and left to perish without resources in the very heart of the Polar regions. ||/||

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C. Students whether connected with the College or not, who have obtained special permission from the Principal.

D. Other persons whether connected with the College or not, who have obtained special permission from the Principal.

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